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MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

1802-1808.

WITH A PREFACE AND NOTES BY HER GRANDSON.

PAUL DE RÉMUSAT,

SENATOR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

MRS. CASHEL HOEY AND JOHN LILLIE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

I.

My father bequeathed to me the manuscript of the memoirs of my grandmother, who was lady-in-waiting to the Empress Josephine, accompanied by an injunction that I should publish them. He regarded those memoirs as extremely important to the history of the first portion of the present century, and had frequently contemplated publishing them himself; but he was always hindered from doing so, either by his other duties, by his many labors, or by certain scruples. He deferred the moment at which the public was to be made acquainted with these valuable reminiscences of an epoch—recent, indeed, but respecting which the present generation is so ill informed—precisely because that epoch was recent, and many persons who had been involved in its important events were still living. Although the author of these memoirs can not be accused of intentional malice, she passes judgment upon persons and things very freely. A certain consideration, which is not always consonant with the verity of history, is due, not only to the living, but to the children of the dead; the years passed on, however, and the reasons for silence diminished with the lapse of time.

About 1848 my father would perhaps have allowed this manuscript to see the light; but the empire and the Emperor returned, and then the book might have been regarded either as a piece of flattery tendered to the son of Queen Hortense, who is very gently handled by the writer, or as a direct insult, on other points, to the dynasty. Circumstances had thus given a polemic character—an aspect of actuality, as the

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phrase goes—to a work which should be regarded as a candid and impartial history, the narrative of a remarkable woman, who relates with simple sincerity that which she witnessed at the court and during the reign of the Emperor, and who records her estimate of him as an individual. In any case, it is probable that the book would have been prosecuted, and its publication interdicted. I may add, lest any should consider these reasons insufficient, that my father, who was always willing that his politics, his opinions, and his personal conduct should be discussed by the critics and the press, who lived in the full glare of publicity, yet shrank with great reluctance from placing names which were dear to him before the public. That they should incur the slightest censure, that they should be uttered with any severity of tone, he dreaded extremely. He was timid when either his mother or his son was in question. His love for his mother had been the "grand passion" of his life. To her he ascribed all the happiness of his youth, every merit which he possessed, and all the success of every kind that had come to him throughout his whole existence. He derived from her his qualities alike of heart and mind; he was bound to her by the tie of close similarity of ideas, as well as by that of filial affection. Her memory, her letters, her thoughts occupied a place in his life which few suspected, for he seldom spoke of her, precisely because he was always thinking of her, and he would have feared imperfect sympathy from others in his admiration of her who was incomparable in his eyes. Who among us does not know what it is to be united by a passionate, almost fierce affection to one who is no more; ceaselessly to think of that beloved one, to question, to dream, to be always under the impression of the vanished presence—of the silent counsels; to feel that the life gone from us is mixed up with our own life, every day, not only on great occasions, and in all our actions, whether public or private; and yet, that we can not bear to speak to others of the ever-present occupant of our thoughts—no, not even to our dearest friends—and

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can not even hear the dear name uttered without secret pain and disquiet? Rarely, indeed, can even the sweetness of praise lavished upon that name by a friend or a stranger avail to soothe our deep, mysterious trouble, or render it endurable.

While, however, a proper and natural sentiment dictates that memoirs should not appear until a considerable time has elapsed, it is equally desirable that their publication should not be delayed until all trace of the facts related, of the impressions made, or of the eye-witnesses of events has passed away. In order that the accuracy, or at least the sincerity of memoirs may not be disputed, each family should be in a position to substantiate them by its own recollections; and it is well that the generation which reads them should follow that which they depict. The records they contain are all the more useful because the times which they chronicle have not yet become altogether historic. This is our case at the present moment, and the great name of Napoleon is still a party battle-cry. It is interesting to introduce a new element into the strife which rages around that majestic shade. Although the epoch of the First Empire has been much discussed by the writers of memoirs, the inner life of the imperial palace has never been handled freely, and in detail; and for this good reasons have existed. The functionaries or the frequenters of the court of Napoleon I. did not care to reveal with entire unreserve the story of the time they had passed in his service. The majority, having joined the Legitimist ranks after the Restoration, were humiliated by the remembrance that they had served the usurper, especially in offices which are generally held to be ennobled only by the hereditary greatness of him who confers them; and their descendants would have been disconcerted had such manuscripts been left to them, by their authors, with the obligation of giving them to the world. It would, perhaps, be difficult to find another editor, also a grandson, who could publish such a work so willingly as I. The talent of the writer and the

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utility of her book affect me much more than the difference between the opinions of my grandmother and those of her descendants. My father's life, his renown, the political creed which is his most precious bequest to me, absolve me from any necessity for explaining how and why it is that I do not necessarily adopt all the views of the author of these Memoirs. On the contrary, it would be easy to find in this book the first traces of that liberal spirit which animated my grandparents in the first days of the Revolution, which was transmitted to and happily developed in their son. It was almost being liberal already not to regard the principles of political liberty with hatred at the end of the last century, when so many people were ready to lay crimes which tarnished the Revolution to the charge of that liberty, and to pass judgment, notwithstanding the true admiration and the deep gratitude with which they regarded the Emperor, on the defects of his character and the evils of despotism.

Such valuable impartiality was rare indeed among the contemporaries of the great Emperor, nor have we met with it in our own time among the servants of a sovereign far less likely to dazzle those who approached him. Such a sentiment is, however, easy at the present day. Events have brought France into a state in which she is ready to receive everything with equanimity, to judge every one with equity. We have observed many changes of opinion concerning the early years of the present century. One need not have reached a very advanced stage of life to recall a time when the legend of the Empire was accepted even by the enemies of the Empire; when it might be admired with impunity; when children believed in an Emperor, who was at once a grand personage and a good fellow, somewhat like the notion of God entertained by Béranger, who indeed turned both God and Napoleon into heroes for his odes. The most determined adversaries of despotism, those who were themselves destined to undergo persecution by a new Empire, brought back to France the mortal remains of Napoleon the

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Great—his "ashes," as, lending an antique coloring to a modern ceremony, it was the fashion to say just then. At a later date, experience of the Second Empire opened the eyes, even of those who do not admit passion into politics, to the truth respecting the first. The disasters brought upon France in 1870, by Napoleon III., have reminded us that it was the other Emperor who commenced that fatal work; and an almost general malediction rises to the lips of the nation at that name—Bonaparte—which was once uttered with respectful enthusiasm. So fluctuating is the justice of nations! It is, however, allowable to say that the justice of France to-day comes nearer to true justice than at the time when, swayed by the longing for rest and the dread of liberty, she surrendered herself to the passion for military glory. Between these two extremes how many modes of opinion have arisen, and gone through their several phases of triumph and decline! It will be evident to all readers, I hope, that the author of the following Memoirs, who came to the Court in her youth, regarded those problems which were then and still are in debate, although General Bonaparte thought he had solved them, with an entire absence of prejudice. Her opinions were formed by degrees, like the opinions of France itself, which was also very young in those days. She was at first dazzled and aroused to enthusiasm by the great genius of the age, but she afterward recovered the balance of her judgment by the aid of events and of contact with other minds. More than one of our contemporaries may find in these Memoirs an explanation of the conduct or the state of mind of some persons of their kin whose Bonapartism or Liberalism at different epochs has hitherto appeared inexplicable to them. And also—not their least merit in my eyes—these Memoirs will reveal to the reader the first germs of a remarkable talent, which was developed in the writer's son to a supreme degree.

A brief summary of the life of my grandmother, or at least of the period which preceded her arrival at Court, is

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indispensable to the reader's comprehension of the impressions and the remembrances which she brought thither. My father had frequently projected a complete biography of his parents, and had, indeed, sketched out some portions of the work. He did not leave any of it in a finished condition; but a great number of notes and fragments written by his own hand, concerning the members of his family, his own youthful opinions, and persons whom he had known, render it easy to narrate the incidents of my grandmother's early years, the feelings with which she entered upon her life at Court, and the circumstances that led her to write her Memoirs. It is also in my power to add some comments upon her by her son, which will lead the reader to know and esteem her. It was my father's strong desire that her readers should be inspired with kindly sentiments toward the object of his own devoted love and admiration; and I believe that the perusal of her reminiscences, and especially of her correspondence, which is also to be given to the public in due time, can not fail to secure the realization of his wish.

II.

Claire Elisabeth Jeanne Gravier de Vergennes was born on the 5th of January, 1780. Her father was Charles Gravier de Vergennes, Counselor to the Parliament of Burgundy, Master of Requests,* afterward Intendant of Auch, and finally Director of the Vingtièmes.† My great-grandfather was not, therefore, as it has been frequently but erroneously stated, the minister who was so well known as the Comte de Vergennes. That minister had an elder brother who was called "the Marquis," the first of the family, I believe, who bore such a title. This marquis had quitted the

* An officer in France, whose duty it is to report petitions to the Council of State.

† The *Vingtième* was a tax imposed, under the *ancien régime*, on land and house property, and which amounted to a twentieth of the revenue.

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magistracy to enter upon a diplomatic career. He was acting as minister in Switzerland in 1777, when the French treaties with the Helvetian Republic were renewed. Afterward he was given the title of ambassador. His son, Charles Gravier de Vergennes, who was born at Dijon in 1751, married Adelaide Françoise de Bastard, born about 1760. This lady's family came originally from Gascony, and a branch of it, whose members distinguished themselves at the bar and in the magistracy, was settled at Toulouse. Her father, Dominique de Bastard, born at Laffitte (Haute-Garonne), had been one of the counselors to the parliament, and was the senior counselor at the time of his death. His bust is in the Salle des Illustres in the Capitol. He took an active part in the measures of Chancellor Maupeou. His daughter's husband, M. de Vergennes, being a member of the legal profession, bore, as was the custom under the old *régime*, no title. It is said that he was a man of only ordinary ability, who took his pleasure in life without much discrimination, but also that he had good sense and was a useful official. He belonged to that administrative school of which MM. de Trudaine were the leaders.

Madame de Vergennes, of whom my father constantly spoke, was a person of more individuality of character; she was both clever and good. When he was quite a child, my father was on most confidential terms with her, as grandsons frequently are with their grandmothers. In his bright and kindly nature, his pleasant raillery, which was never malicious, he resembled her; and from her he also inherited his musical gifts, a good voice for singing, and a quick memory for the airs and couplets of the vaudevilles of the day. He never lost his habit of humming the popular songs of the old *régime*. Madame de Vergennes had the ideas of her time—a touch of philosophy, stopping short of incredulity, and a certain repugnance to the Court, although she regarded Louis XVI. with affection and respect. Her intellect, which was bright, practical, and independent, was highly cultivated;

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her conversation was brilliant and sometimes very free, after the manner of the period. Nevertheless, she gave her two daughters, Claire and Alix,* a strict and indeed rather solitary education, for it was the fashion of that day that parents should see but little of their children. The two sisters studied in a large, fireless room, apart from the rest of the house, under the inspection of a governess, and were instructed in what may be called the frivolous arts—music, drawing, and dancing. They were seldom taken to see a play, but they were occasionally indulged with a visit to the opera, and now and then with a ball.

M. de Vergennes had not desired or foreseen the Revolution; but he was neither displeased nor alarmed by it. He and his friends belonged to that citizen class, ennobled by holding public offices, which seemed to be the nation itself, and he can not have found himself much out of his place among those who were called "the electors of '89." He was elected a member of the Council of the Commune, and made a major in the National Guard. M. de Lafayette, whose granddaughter was to become the wife of M. de Vergennes's grandson, forty years after, and M. Royer-Collard, whom that grandson was to succeed at the French Academy, treated him like one of themselves. His opinions were more in accordance with those of M. Royer-Collard than with those of M. de Lafayette, and the French Revolution soon shot far ahead of him. He did not, however, feel any inclination to emigrate. His patriotism, as well as his attachment to Louis XVI., led him to remain in France; and thus he was unable to elude that fate which, in 1793, threatened all who were in positions similar to his and of the same way of thinking. He was falsely accused of intending to emigrate, by the Administration of the Department of Saône et Loire; his property was placed under sequestration; and he was arrested in Paris, at the house in the Rue Saint Eustache which

* Some years later, Mademoiselle Alix de Vergennes married General de Nansouty.

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he had inhabited since 1788. The man who arrested him had no warrant from the Committee of Public Safety except for the arrest of M. de Vergennes's father. He took the son because he lived with the father, and both died on the same scaffold on the 6th Thermidor (24th July, 1794), three days before the fall of Robespierre.*

M. de Vergennes's death left his unhappy wife and daughters unprotected, and in straitened circumstances, as he had sold his estate in Burgundy a short time previously, and its price had been confiscated by the nation. There remained to them, however, one friend, not powerful, indeed, but full of zeal and good will. This was a young man with whom M. de Vergennes had become acquainted in the early days of the Revolution, whose family had formerly been of some importance in the commercial world, and also in the civic administration of Marseilles, so that the younger members were taking their places in the magistracy and in the army, in short, among "the privileged," as the phrase then went. This young man, Augustin Laurent de Rémusat, was born at Valensoles, in Provence, on the 28th of August, 1762. After having studied, with great credit, at Juilly, the former seat of that Oratorian College which still exists near Paris, he was nominated, at twenty years of age, advocate-general to the *Cour des Aides* and the *Chambre des Comptes Réunies* † of Provence. My father has sketched the portrait of that young man, his arrival in Paris, and his life in the midst of the new society. The following note tells, better than I could, how M. de Rémusat loved and married Mademoiselle Claire de Vergennes:

"The society of Aix, a city in which nobles dwelt and a parliament assembled, was of the brilliant order. My father lived a great deal in society. He was of an agreeable pres-

* For the text of the accusation against M. de Vergennes, see Appendix.

† These obsolete institutions have no English equivalents. They are, respectively, the auxiliary and superior courts established for the examination of the accounts of the receivers of the money of the state.

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ence, had a great deal of pleasant humor, fine and polished manners, high spirits, and a reputation for gallantry. He sought and obtained all the social success that a young man could desire. Nevertheless, he attended sedulously to his profession, which he liked, and he married, in 1783, Mademoiselle de Sannes, the daughter of the *Procureur-Général* of his *Compagnie*. This marriage was dissolved by the death of Madame de Rémusat, who died shortly after the birth of a daughter.

"The Revolution broke out; the supreme courts were suppressed; and the settling of their business was a serious and important affair. In order to carry it through, the *Cour des Aides* sent a deputation to Paris. My father was one of the delegates. He has often told me that he then had occasion to see M. de Mirabeau, deputy for Aix, on the business of his mission; and, notwithstanding his prejudices as an adherent of the old parliaments, he was charmed with Mirabeau's pompous politeness. My father never told me details of his manner of living, so that I do not know what were the circumstances under which he went to the house of my grandfather Vergennes. He passed through the terrible years of the Revolution alone and unknown in Paris, and without any personal mishaps. Society no longer existed. His company was therefore all the more agreeable, and even the more useful to my grandmother (Madame de Vergennes), who was involved in great anxieties and misfortunes. My father used to tell me that my grandfather was a commonplace sort of man, but he soon learned to appreciate my grandmother very highly, and she conceived a liking for him. She was a wise, moderate-minded woman, who entertained no fancies, cherished no prejudices, and gave way to no impulses. She distrusted everything in which there was any exaggeration, and detested affectation of every kind, but she was readily touched by solid worth and by genuine feeling; while her clear-headedness and her practical, somewhat sarcastic turn of mind preserved her

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from everything that lacked prudence or morality. Her head was never betrayed by her heart; but, as she had suffered from the neglect of a husband to whom she was superior, she was disposed to make inclination and choice the ruling motives of marriage.

"Immediately after the death of my grandfather, a decree was issued, by which all nobles were ordered to quit Paris. Madame de Vergennes retired to Saint Gratien, in the valley of Montmorency, with her two daughters, Claire and Alix; and she gave my father permission to follow her thither. His presence was precious to them. His bright and cheerful nature, his amiability, and careful attentions to those he loved, made him a charming companion. His taste for a quiet life, the country, and seclusion, and his cultivated mind, exactly fitted him for a family circle composed of intelligent persons, and in which education was always going on. I can not believe that my grandmother did not early foresee and acquiesce in that which was destined to happen, even supposing there was not at that time anything to read in the heart of her daughter. It is certain, for my mother says so in several of her letters, that, although she was then only a child, her prematurely serious turn of mind, her sensitive and emotional nature, her vivid imagination, and finally, the combined influences of intimacy, solitude, and misfortune, all united to inspire her with an interest in my father, which had from the first all the characteristics of a lofty and abiding sentiment. I do not think I have ever met a woman in whom so much moral strictness was combined with so much romantic sensibility as in my mother. Her youth, her extreme youth, was, as it were, steadied by those fortunate circumstances which bound her to duty by ties of passion, and procured for her that rare combination, peace of soul and the delightful agitation of the heart.

"She was not tall, but her figure was elegant and well proportioned. She was fair and plump; indeed, it used to be feared that she would grow too fat. Her eyes were fine

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and expressive, black, like her hair; her features were regular, but rather too large. Her countenance was grave, almost imposing; but the intelligent kindliness of her glance tempered the gravity of her features very pleasantly. Her strong, well-trained, fertile intellect had certain virile qualities, with which the extreme vividness of her imagination frequently clashed. She possessed sound judgment and keen powers of observation, and she was entirely unaffected in her manners and in her modes of expression, although she was not without a certain subtlety of ideas. In reality, she was profoundly reasonable, but she was headstrong; her intellect was more reasonable than herself. In her youth she lacked gayety and probably ease, may have appeared to be pedantic because she was serious, affected because she was silent, absent-minded, and indifferent to almost all the small things of every-day life. But, with her mother, whose cheerful moods she sometimes crossed, with her husband, whose simple tastes and easy temper she never crossed, she was not wanting in richness and freedom. She had even a kind of gayety of her own, which developed as she grew older, when, having been very absent and absorbed in her own thoughts while she was very young, she became more like her mother. I have often thought that, if she had lived long enough to share the house in which I am writing to-day, she would have been the merriest of us all."

My father wrote these lines in 1857, at Laffitte (Haute-Garonne), where all those whom he loved were assembled, and we were gay and happy. In quoting them I am somewhat outrunning my narrative, for he speaks here of his mother as of a woman and not as of a young girl, and Claire de Vergennes, when she married, early in the year 1796, was hardly sixteen years old.

M. and Mme. de Rémusat—for thus I shall designate them henceforth, for the sake of clearness in my story—lived sometimes in Paris, and sometimes in a modest country house at Saint Gratien, a residence which had two strong

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recommendations—the beauty of the landscape and the attraction of the neighborhood.

Nearest and pleasantest of neighbors were the owners of Sannois, with whom Madame de Vergennes was very intimate. Jean Jacques Rousseau's "Confessions," Madame d'Epinay's "Mémoires," and a hundred works of the last century as well, have made the place and the persons known to the world. Madame d'Houdetot (Sophie de Lalive) had lived peacefully, in her old age, throughout the troublous time of the Revolution in that country house, in the society of her husband and of M. de Saint Lambert.* Between the famous trio and the young couple at Saint Gratien so close an intimacy was formed that, when the house at Saint Gratien was sold, my grandparents hired one within a shorter distance of the residence of their friends, and a way of communication was made between the gardens of their respective abodes. By degrees, however, M. de Rémusat got into the habit of going to Paris more and more frequently; and, as the times became quieter, he began to think of emerging from obscurity, and from the narrow circumstances to which he was reduced by the confiscation of the property of his wife's father and the loss of his own place in the magistracy. As is always the case in France, it was of employment in some public function that he thought. He had no relations with the Government, or even with M. de Talleyrand, who was then Foreign Minister, but he directed his efforts toward that department, and obtained, if not exactly a place, at least an occupation, which was likely to lead to a place, in the office of the solicitors to the Ministry.

Besides the agreeable and intellectual relations which they maintained with Sannois, M. and Mme. de Rémusat had formed an intimacy no less close, but which was destined to exercise a much greater influence over their fortunes, with Madame de Beauharnais, who, in 1796, became the wife of Bonaparte. When her friend had acquired power

* See Appendix.

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through her all-powerful husband, Madame de Vergennes applied to her on behalf of her son-in-law, who wished to enter the Council of State or the Administration. The First Consul, however, or his wife, had a different idea of what ought to be done. The consideration and respect in which Madame de Vergennes was held, her social station, her name—which was allied both to the old *régime* and to the new ideas—gave a certain value to the relations of her family with the consular palace, which at that time had but little intercourse with Parisian society. Quite unexpectedly, M. de Rémusat was appointed Prefect of the Palace, in 1802; and shortly afterward Madame de Rémusat became Lady-in-Waiting (*Dame pour Accompagner*) to Madame Bonaparte, a title which was soon changed into the better sounding one of Lady of the Palace (*Dame du Palais*).

III.

Persons of the way of thinking of M. and Mme. de Rémusat had no sacrifice to make in casting in their lot with the new *régime*. They had neither the extravagant sentiments of the Royalists, nor the austerity of the Republicans. No doubt their attitude of mind approached more nearly to that of the Royalists than to that of the Republicans, but their royalism reduced itself to pious veneration for Louis XVI. The misfortunes of that unhappy prince rendered his memory sacred, and his person had always been regarded in the family of M. de Vergennes with peculiar respect; but "Legitimacy" had not yet been invented, and those persons who most deeply deplored the fall of the old *régime*, or rather that of the ancient dynasty, did not hold themselves under any obligation to believe that everything done in France in the absence of the Bourbons was null and void. Pure and unalloyed admiration was inspired by the young general who was reëstablishing material, if not moral order, with such brilliant success, in a society which was dis-

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turbed after a fashion very different from that of those successive later times, in which so many worthless "saviours" have turned up.

Public functionaries in those days adhered to the opinion which was very natural under the old *régime*, that an official is responsible only for what he does, and not for either the acts or the origin of the Government. The sense of "solidarity" does not exist in absolute monarchies. The parliamentary *régime* has happily rendered us more sensitive, and all honest people now admit the collective responsibility of all the agents of a power. One could not nowadays serve a government whose tendency and general policy one did not approve; but it was otherwise in former times. My father —who had more right than any one else to be strict in these matters, and who, perhaps, owed somewhat of his extreme political scrupulousness to the difficult position in which he had seen his parents placed during his own childhood, between their private impressions and their official duties— explains these shades of difference in an unpublished letter to M. Sainte Beuve, to whom he had communicated certain biographical details for an article in the "Revue des Deux Mondes."

"It was not as a *pis aller*, from necessity, weakness, or as a temporary expedient, that my parents attached themselves to the new *régime*. Of their free will and with entire confidence they united themselves with its fortunes. If you add to that all the pleasures of an easy and prominent position to be stepped into from one of poverty and obscurity, the curiosity which a court of so novel a kind inspired, the incomparable interest of the spectacle of a man like the Emperor at an epoch when he was irreproachable, young, and still amiable, you can easily conceive the attraction which induced my parents to overlook all that was in reality opposed to their tastes, their reason, and even their true interests in this new position. At the end of two or three years, they had learned too well that a court is always a

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court, and that all is not pleasure in the personal service of an absolute master, even though he may charm and dazzle. But this did not prevent their being for a long time well enough satisfied with their lot. My mother especially was much amused with all that passed before her eyes, and she was on very good terms with the Empress, who was extremely kind and generous, while she enthusiastically admired the Emperor. He treated my mother with flattering distinction. She was almost the only woman with whom he ever talked. My mother would sometimes say, after the Empire had ceased to exist:

'Va, je t'ai trop aimé pour ne pas te haïr!'"

Of the impressions made by the new Court upon the new Lady of the Palace we have no record. The security of the Post-office was very doubtful. Madame de Vergennes burned all her daughter's letters, and the correspondence of the latter with her husband does not commence until some years later, during the Emperor's journeys in Italy and Germany. Nevertheless, we can perceive from her Memoirs, although they do not abound in personal details, how strange and novel everything seemed to so very young a woman, transplanted all of a sudden into this palace, and an eye-witness of the private life of the glorious chief of an unknown government. She was very serious, as, when they are not very frivolous, the young are apt to be, and much disposed to observation and reflection. She seems to have had no taste for display, no great solicitude about external things, no turn for gossip or the running down of other people, no love of talking or display. What was thought of her at that time? We can not tell. We only know, from certain passages in sundry letters and memoirs, that she was considered clever, and that people were a little afraid of her. Probably, however, her companions thought her pedantic rather than dangerous. She had a considerable "success," especially at first; for in its early days the Court was not

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numerous — there were few distinctions or favors to be schemed for, rivalry was not very brisk or ardent. Little by little, however, this little society became a real court. Now, courtiers are always afraid of intellect, and especially of that disposition, unintelligible to them, which clever people have to interest themselves in a disinterested manner, so to speak, in knowing things and judging characters, without even thinking of turning their knowledge to their own advantage. Courtiers always suspect that every opinion has a hidden aim. Persons of quick intellect are very strongly impressed by the spectacle of human affairs, even when they are merely looking on at them. And that faculty is the most incomprehensible to those who do not possess it, and who attribute its effects to some personal motive, or interested calculation. They suspect intrigue or resentment every time that they observe a movement in any direction, but they have no idea of the spontaneous and gratuitous action of the mind. Every one has been exposed to mistrust of this kind, which is more to be dreaded when a woman, endowed with excessive activity of imagination, and drawn on by her intelligence to form opinions on matters out of her sphere, is in question. Many persons, especially in that somewhat coarse society, would detect egotism and pretension in her life and conversation, and accuse her unduly of ambition.

That her husband was entirely devoid of ambition, and free from any disposition to intrigue, was evident to all. The position in which the favor of the First Consul had placed him did not suit him; he would, no doubt, have preferred some laborious administrative function to one which demanded nothing of him but suavity and a graceful demeanor. From the "Memoirs," from his own letters, and from my father's account of him, we gather that M. de Rémusat was a man of discreet conduct, with keen wits, and a cheerful and even temper—not at all a person calculated to make enemies. Indeed, he would never have had any, but for a certain shyness, which, little as it seems to harmo-

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nize with conversational powers and an agreeable manner, is, nevertheless, occasionally allied with them. His taste for quiet life, and some indolence and timidity of character, had impelled him more and more toward retirement and isolation. Modesty and self-esteem mingled in his nature; and, without rendering him insensible to the honors of the post which he had obtained, they sometimes made him ashamed of the solemn trifles to which that very post forced him to devote his life. He believed himself to be made for better things, but he did not care for toiling in search of that which did not come to him of itself. He took but little pleasure in expressing the art, in which he was probably not deficient, of managing men. He did not love to put himself forward, and his indolent temperament induced him to let things take their chance. He afterward became a hard-working prefect, but he was a negligent and inactive courtier. He employed his skill simply to avoid disputes, and he discharged his official functions with quiet good taste. After having had many friends, and entered into numerous relations, he let them drop through, or at least he never seemed to do anything to retain them. Unless great care be taken, ties are loosened, recollections are effaced, rivalries are formed, and all the chances of ambition escape one's grasp. M. de Rémusat had no skill in playing a part, forming connections, bringing people together, or contriving the opportunities of fortune or success. He seems never to have regretted this. It would be easy for me to trace his motives—to depict his character in detail, and to narrate his errors, his grievances, and even his sufferings; for was he not my grandfather?

The first severe trial which M. and Mme. de Rémusat had to endure in their new position was the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. How profound was the grief which they felt when the man whom they ardently admired, as the express image of power and genius, and whom they strove to love, stained his hands with innocent blood, and they were forced to recognize that such a deed was simply the result of

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a cold and inhuman calculation, the following narrative will prove. It will, indeed, be seen that the impression made by the crime upon all honest persons at the Court was even deeper than that which it produced outside among the general public, who had become almost indifferent, through custom, to deeds of this kind. Even among the Royalists, who were absolutely inimical to the Government, the event caused more sorrow than indignation, so perverted had the public mind become in political matters and respecting State expedients! Where could the men of that day have acquired principles? Was it the old *régime* or the Terror which could have instructed them? A short time afterward, the Sovereign Pontiff came to Paris, and, among the reasons which made him hesitate to crown the new Charlemagne, it is very doubtful whether this one was ever even weighed for a moment. The press was dumb, and men must be possessed of information before they are aroused to anger. Let us hope that civilization has now made so much progress that a repetition of similar incidents would be impossible. We should, however, be restrained from optimism on this point by the remembrance of what we have witnessed in our own time.

The following Memoirs are an exact record of the life of the author, and the history of the early years of the present century. They show us what changes the establishment of the Empire effected at the Court, and how life there and its relations became more difficult and embarrassing; how by degrees the prestige of the Emperor declined, in proportion as he misused his great gifts, his power, and his chances. Mistakes, reverses, and failures were multiplied; and at the same time the adhesion of the earliest admirers of the Emperor became less fervent, and the manner of serving reflected the mode of thinking. Two parties, the Beauharnais and the Bonapartes, disputed the favor of the sovereign master with each other; and M. and Mme. de Rémusat were regarded as belonging to the former, by reason of their natu-

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ral feelings and their family relations. Their position was consequently affected in no small degree by the downfall and departure of the Empress Josephine. Everything was, however, much changed, and, when her lady-in-waiting followed her into her retirement, the Emperor seems to have made but little effort to detain Mme. de Rémusat. Perhaps he was glad that a person of good sense and quick intelligence should watch over his forsaken and somewhat imprudent wife; but it must also be taken into account that my grandmother's delicate health, her love of quiet, and her distaste for all festivities, had isolated her almost entirely from court life.

Her husband, wearied and disgusted, gave way every day more and more to his discontent, and to his inability to lay himself out to please the great personages who were either cold or hostile to him. He neglected his functions as Chamberlain in order to concentrate himself on his duties as "Administrator of Theatres," but the latter he fulfilled admirably. A great part of the actual organization of the Théâtre Français is due to him. My father, born in 1797, and very young when his father was Chamberlain to the Emperor, was remarkable as a child for his intelligence and his observation, and he retained a very distinct recollection of that period of discouragement and ennui. He has told me that he frequently knew his father to return from Saint Cloud utterly worn out, and tried beyond his patience by the burden which the arbitrariness and the ill temper of the Emperor laid upon all who approached him. That the child was an eye- and ear-witness of his complaints at those moments in which restraints are cast off is evident, for, when he was more master of himself, he was fain to represent himself as satisfied with his master and his position, and he endeavored to conceal his vexations from his son. Perhaps he was better calculated to serve the simple, tranquil, sober, intellectual Bonaparte, while still a novice in the pleasures of sovereignty, than the *blasé* and intoxicated Napoleon, who exhibited the worst taste

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possible on all State occasions, and became more exacting every day in the matter of ceremonial and adulatory observance.

An apparently trifling circumstance, whose gravity was not at first perceived by those whom it concerned, increased the difficulties of the situation, and hurried on the inevitable catastrophe. Although the history of the affair is insignificant, it will not be read without interest, and it sheds a light upon times now happily far removed from us, and which Frenchmen, if the lessons of the past are to avail, will not suffer to return.

The celebrated Lavoisier was very intimate with M. de Vergennes. He died, as every one knows, on the scaffold on the 19th Floreal, year 2 (9th May, 1794). His widow, who contracted a second marriage with M. Rumford, a German *savant*, or at least a commercial man aiming at science—for he was the inventor of the Prussian stoves, and also of the thermometer that bears his name—remained on terms of close friendship with Madame de Vergennes and her family. This second marriage had not been happy, and compassion was, very justly, excited on behalf of the ill-treated wife, who was compelled to invoke the protection of the law against unendurable tyranny and exaction. As M. Rumford was a foreigner, it was in the power of the police to procure information respecting him from his own country, to reprimand him severely, and even to oblige him to leave France. This, I believe, was eventually done, and it was at the request of my grandmother that M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché took up the matter. Madame Rumford was anxious to evince her gratitude to those personages, and the following is my father's account of the results of her wish:

"My mother consented to invite Madame Rumford to dinner, to meet M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché. Surely, it was not an act of opposition to entertain the High Chamberlain and the Minister of Police at her table! Nevertheless, that meeting—so naturally brought about, the motive of

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which was as insignificant as it was harmless, but which was, I acknowledge, unusual, and never occurred again—was represented to the Emperor, in the reports that were sent out to him in Spain, as a political conference, and the proof of an important coalition. Although I do not contend that it was impossible for M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché to have taken advantage of the opportunity of talking together; or deny that my mother, perceiving the respective inclinations of the two, or put upon the scent by something that was said by M. de Talleyrand, might have regarded the occasion as a favorable one for bringing about an interview which amused herself at the same time that it was useful to one of her friends, I have not the slightest reason for supposing that such was the case. I am, on the contrary, perfectly certain of having heard my father and mother quote this incident, when reverting to it some years afterward, as an instance of the unexpected importance which may be assumed by a fortuitous and insignificant matter, and say, smilingly, that Madame Rumford little knew what she had cost them.

"They added that on that occasion the word 'triumvirate' had been uttered, and my mother had said, laughingly, 'My dear, I am sorry for it; but your lot could only be that of Lepidus.' My father also said that certain persons of the Court, not enemies of his, had sometimes spoken of 'the Conference' to him as a fact, and had said, though without any hostile intention, 'Now that it is all over, tell us what it was about, and what it was you really meant to do?'"

This narrative gives us an insight into the life of Courts, and also testifies to the intimacy of my grandparents with M. de Talleyrand. Although the former Bishop of Autun does not seem to have been actuated in this particular instance by that kind of feeling which he habitually carried into his relations with women, he both liked and admired Mme. de Rémusat. I have found amusing evidence of his sentiments in a sketch of her which he wrote, on the official

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paper of the Senate, during the leisure time of a sitting at which he presided as "Vice-Grand Elector," probably in 1811:

"Conservative Senate,
"Luxembourg, *April 29th.*

"I have a fancy for commencing the portrait of Clari. She is not what the world calls a beauty, but every one agrees in pronouncing her an agreeable woman. She is twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old, and she is neither more nor less blooming than she ought to be at twenty-eight. Her figure is good, her carriage is graceful and unaffected. Clari is not thin; she is only slight and refined. Her complexion is not brilliant, but she has the special charm of looking fairer in proportion as she is in a stronger light. To describe Clari in a sentence, let me say that the better she is known the more amiable she appears.

"Clari has large, black eyes; their long lids give an expression of mingled tenderness and vivacity which is striking, even when her mind is inactive and she does not want to express anything. Those occasions are, however, very rare. Lively ideas, quick perception, a vivid imagination, exquisite sensibility, and constant kindness are expressed in her glance. To give an idea of that, it would be necessary to paint the soul which depicts itself in it, and then Clari would be the most beautiful of beings. I am not sufficiently well versed in the rules of drawing to know whether Clari's features are quite regular. I believe her nose is too thick; but I know that she has beautiful eyes, lips, and teeth. A great part of her forehead is generally hidden by her hair, and that is a pity. Her smile is rendered as arch as it is sweet by her two dimples. Her dress is often careless, but never in bad taste, and she is scrupulously neat. That neatness forms part of the system of order and decorum from which Clari never deviates. Clari is not rich, but as she is moderate in her tastes and above caprice and fancy, she despises extravagance, and has never perceived that her fortune is limited, except

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when she has been obliged to restrain her benevolence. But, besides the art of giving, she has a thousand other ways of conferring kindnesses. Always ready to commend good deeds and to excuse faults, her mind is always bent on beneficent purposes. Clari affords us a striking proof of how much superior a kindly wit is to talent which produces only severity, criticism, and satire. She is more ingenious in her manner of passing favorable judgments than ever was malignity in the art of suggesting the false and suppressing the true.

"Clari always vindicates those whose part she takes, but without offending those whom she confutes. Clari has a large and cultivated mind. I know no one who can talk better than she; but she exhibits her superior information only when she is giving one a proof of her confidence and friendship. Clari's husband knows that he possesses a treasure, and has the good sense to appreciate it. Clari is a good mother; that is her reward."

The Emperor was displeased at the intimacy between the Grand Chamberlain and the First Chamberlain, and these Memoirs will show that he tried more than once to set the two at variance. He even succeeded for a time in alienating them. But their intimacy was unbroken when M. Talleyrand fell into disgrace.

It is well known that honorable motives on his part led to a violent altercation between himself and his imperial master in January, 1809, at the period of the Spanish war, which was the beginning of the misfortunes of the empire, and the result of the Emperor's errors. Both M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché predicted, or at least foreboded, that public disapprobation and suspicion would be aroused. "Throughout the whole empire," writes M. Thiers,* "hate was beginning to take the place of love." This change was taking place among officials as well as citizens. Moreover, M. de Montesquiou, a member of the Legislature, who suc-

* "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," vol. xi., p. 312.

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ceeded M. de Talleyrand in his place at court, was a less important personage than the latter, who had relegated to the First Chamberlain not only the troublesome portions of the duties of his post, but also those which were agreeable, and which conferred distinction. It was a "come-down" to lose a chief whose own importance enhanced that of the position next below him. Truly this was a strange time!

Talleyrand, though in disgrace as a minister, and as the holder of one of the highest posts at Court, had not forfeited the Emperor's confidence. The latter would send for him every now and then, and freely disclose the secret of the question or the circumstance on which he desired his advice. These consultations went on to the end, even at those times when the Emperor was talking of sending M. de Talleyrand to Vincennes. In return, M. de Talleyrand would enter into his views, and advise him with perfect frankness; and so this strange intercourse was carried on as if nothing had happened between them.

State policy and the greatness of his own position afforded certain privileges and consolations to M. de Talleyrand which were beyond the reach of a chamberlain or a lady-in-waiting. Those who are in close contact with absolute power do not foresee that the day must come when their feelings will clash with their interests, and some of their duties with others. They forget that there are principles of government which must be guarded by constitutional guarantees. They yield to the natural desire to be "somebodies" in the state, to serve the established authority; they do not study the nature and conditions of that authority. So long as it exacts nothing against their conscience, they serve it in the sphere to which it has appointed them. But the hour comes when, without exacting anything new from them, it carries extravagance, violence, and injustice to such a height that it becomes hard to obey it, even in things of no moment; they remain, nevertheless, bound to obedience, while in their inmost soul they are full of indignation and of pain. Then comes actual

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desire for its fall. It may be said that their course is simple; let them resign. But they are afraid of giving rise to rumor and scandal, of being neither understood nor approved by public opinion. Moreover, no contract binds the servants of the state to the conduct of the chief of the state. Having no rights, they would seem to have no duties. They are powerless for prevention, and are, therefore, not afraid of having to expiate errors. Thus people thought in the reign of Louis XIV., and thus they still think in a great part of Europe; it was thus they thought under Napoleon, and perhaps they will be of the same opinion again. So shameful and wretched a thing is absolute power! It paralyzes both the honest scruples and the real duties of honest men.

IV.

Traces of these convictions, or at least of their germ, may be discerned in the correspondence of M. and Madame de Rémusat, and all things contributed to confirm them. Direct communication with the Emperor became more and more infrequent, and his charm of manner, though still powerful, failed to weaken the impression made by his policy. The divorce of the Empress restored to Madame de Rémusat, in great part, her freedom of judgment and the disposal of her time. She attached herself to the Empress Josephine in her disgrace, a proceeding not calculated to raise her in the estimation of the Court. Her husband soon after retired from the post of Keeper of the Wardrobe, under circumstances which are detailed in these Memoirs, and the coolness increased. I use the word "coolness" advisedly, because in certain pamphlets written against my father it was alleged that his family had been guilty of grave offenses, at which the Emperor was much incensed. That this was quite untrue is amply proved by the fact that although M. de Rémusat resigned the post of Keeper of the Wardrobe, he continued to be Chamberlain and Supervisor of Theatres.

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He merely gave up the most troublesome and most onerous of his offices. No doubt those habits of intimacy and confidence which arise in common every-day life were weakened by his relinquishment of that post; but, on the other hand, he gained greater freedom and more frequent intercourse, both with his family and with society, and, as they were no longer restricted to the drawing-rooms of the Tuileries and St. Cloud, both husband and wife were enabled to bring more clear-sightedness and independence of judgment to bear upon the policy of their sovereign. Before the final disasters, aided by the advice and predictions of M. de Talleyrand, they foresaw the fall of the Empire, and were enabled to choose between the possible solutions of the problem then in course of working out. There was no hope that the Emperor would be satisfied with a peace more humiliating to himself than to France, and indeed Europe was no longer in the humor to gratify him even to that extent.

The public mind turned naturally toward the return of the Bourbons, notwithstanding certain drawbacks, which were but dimly apprehended. The *salons* of Paris, without being actually Royalist, were anti-revolutionary. At this epoch the plan of making the Bonapartes heads of the Conservative and Catholic party had not yet been invented. To bring back the Bourbons was a very momentous resolution, and it was not adopted without struggles, anxieties, and apprehensions of all sorts. My father regarded the painful recollection which he always retained of the attitude of his family in 1814—a family so simple, so honorable, and so unpretending—as a useful political lesson, one which contributed, as much as his own reflections, to lead him to believe that simplicity and straightforwardness are the truest policy. He records in the following words his own observations on the state of feeling that prevailed at the fall of the Empire:

"Policy alone reconciled my family to the Restoration. My father never for a moment regarded his own acquiescence

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otherwise than as an absolute necessity, of which he voluntarily accepted the consequences. It would have been foolish to conceal the nature of those consequences, or to have endeavored to avoid them altogether; but they might have been more firmly resisted, or at least some effort might have been made to reduce their proportions. My mother, as a woman, was influenced by the sentimental aspect of Bourbonism, and allowed herself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment. In every great political movement there is a fascination, unless one is preserved from it by party spirit; and this sympathy, combined with the national taste for declamation, has a large share in the absurdities which accompany every change of government. My mother was, however, disgusted from the first by the exaggeration of sentiment, of opinion, and of ridiculous language, that prevailed. The humiliating and insolent side of the Restoration, as indeed of every restoration, is what shocks me the most; but, if the Royalists had not gone too far, a great deal would have been overlooked. The things of this kind which sensible folk will endure are surprising. I still feel grateful to my father because, in the very first days of the Monarchy, he somewhat sharply rebuked a person who was advocating in our *salon* the extreme doctrines of Legitimacy. Nevertheless, we had to accept this Legitimacy under a more politic form. The word itself was, I believe, sanctioned by M. de Talleyrand, and thence ensued an inevitable train of consequences which speedily developed themselves."

This is not merely an historical judgment of my father's; at that time he was beginning, notwithstanding his youth, to think for himself, and to guide, or at least to influence, the political opinions of his parents. As I shall soon be in a position to publish the reminiscences of his youth, I will not dwell upon them here. I must, however, mention him in connection with the memoirs of his mother, as he had more to do with them than might be supposed.

I have not hitherto alluded to one of the most character-

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istic traits of her whose life I have undertaken to narrate. She was a tender, careful, and admirable mother. Her son Charles, born on the 24th Ventose, year 5 (March 14, 1797), cheered her from his childhood with the hopes which he afterward realized, and, as he grew in years and intelligence, aroused in her intellectual tastes similar to his own. Her second son, Albert, was born five years later than Charles, and died in 1830. His faculties were never completely developed; he remained a child until the end. She had tender compassion for him, and lavished upon him care so unceasing and devoted that it was admirable even in a mother. But her great love was for her first-born, and never was filial or maternal affection founded on more striking resemblance in mind and character. Her letters are full of her maternal tenderness. The following is addressed to her beloved son, when he was just sixteen. I think it will convey a favorable impression of both, and throw a light on the history of their after lives:

VICHY, *July 25, 1813.*

"I have been suffering from a severe sore throat for the last few days, and time has hung heavily, my child; to-day I feel a little better, and I am going to amuse myself by writing to you. Besides, you have been scolding me for my silence, and reproaching me too often with your four letters. I will no longer be behindhand with you, and this letter, I think, will entitle me to scold you in my turn, if an opportunity offers. My dear boy, I follow you step by step in all your studies, and I see you are full of work during this month of July, which I am passing so monotonously. I know pretty well, too, all you say and do on Thursdays and Sundays. Madame de Grasse * tells me of your little talks, and amuses me with it all. For instance, she told me that

* Madame de Grasse was the widow of an *émigré*, who lived in my grandmother's house and was very intimate with her. Her son, Count Gustave de Grasse, was a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Guard, and lived on terms of the

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the other day you had praised me to her, and said that when you and I talk together you are sometimes tempted to think me too clever. But you need not be checked by any fear of that, for you, my dear child, have at least as much wit as I. I tell you so frankly, because that gift, although an advantage, needs many other things to support it, and therefore you may take my words rather as warning than as praise. If my conversation with you often takes a serious turn, you must impute it to the fact that I am your mother, and have not relinquished that *rôle;* to my discovery of some wise thoughts in my own head, and wanting to put them into yours; and to my desire to make good use of the quickly passing time that will soon bear you far from me. When I need no longer advise and warn you, we shall talk together quite at our ease, interchanging our reflections, our remarks, and our opinions on everything and everybody quite frankly, without fear of vexing one another; in fact, with all that sincere and intimate friendship which, I believe, may perfectly well exist between a mother and a son. There are not so many years between us as to prevent me from sympathizing with your youth, or sharing some of your feelings. Women's shoulders wear young heads for a long time, and in the head of a mother one side is always just the same age as her child's.

"Madame de Grasse told me also that you want to amuse yourself during these holidays by writing some of your notions on various subjects. I think you are right. It will be interesting for you to read them again in a few years. Your father would say I want to make you a scribbler like myself —for he does not stand on ceremony with me—but I do not care. There can be no harm in setting down one's thoughts in writing for one's self alone, and I think both taste and style may be formed in this way. It is just because your father is lazy, and only writes one letter a week; true, it is

closest friendship with my father until his death in 1859, notwithstanding the wide dissimilarity of their opinions and habits.

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a very pleasant one, but still that is not much. . . . But there! I must not run on about him.

"During my retirement I thought I should like to draw your portrait, and if I had not had a sore throat, I would have tried to do so. While I was thinking it over, I found that in order not to be insipid, and, indeed, to be correct, I should have to point out a few faults, and I do believe the hard words have stuck in my throat and given me quinsy. While planning this portrait, I assure you I took you to pieces very carefully, and I found many good qualities well developed, a few just beginning to bud, and then some slight congestions which hinder certain others from exhibiting themselves. I beg your pardon for using a medical expression; it is because I am in a place where nothing but congestions and the way to get rid of them is talked about. I will explain all this some day when I am in the vein, but to-day I will touch only on one point—your behavior to others. You are polite—more so, indeed, than is customary at your age: you have a pleasant manner in addressing people, and you are a good listener. Do not let this last quality slip. Madame de Sévigné says that an appreciative silence is a mark of superior sense in young people. 'But, mother, what are you driving at? You promised to point out a fault, and hitherto I see nothing like one. A father's blow turns aside. Let us come to the fact, my dear mother.' So I will, my son, in one moment; you forget that I have a sore throat, and can only speak slowly. Well, then, you are polite. When you are *asked* to do something which will gratify those you love, you consent willingly; but, when an opportunity of so doing is merely pointed out to you, natural indolence and a certain love of self make you hesitate; and, when left to yourself, you do not seek such opportunities, for fear of the trouble they might entail. Can you understand these subtile distinctions? While you are still partly under my authority, I can influence and guide you: but you will soon have to answer for yourself, and I should wish you to think a little

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about other people, notwithstanding the claims of your own youth, which are naturally engrossing. I am not sure that I have expressed myself clearly. As my ideas have to find their way through a headache and all my bandages, and for the last four days I have not sharpened my wits by contact with those of Albert, the quinsy may possibly have got into my discourse.

"You must make the best of it. At any rate, it is a fact that you have polished manners, in other words, you are kind. Kindness is the politeness of the heart. But enough.

. . . . . .

"Your little brother makes a good figure at the village dances. He has become quite a rustic. In the morning he fishes and takes long walks about the country. He understands more about trees and agriculture than you do. In the evening he shines among our big Auvergne shepherdesses, to whom he shows off all those little airs and graces which you know so well.

"Adieu, my dear son; I leave off because I have come to the end of my paper. Writing all this to you relieves me a little of my *ennui*, but I must not quite overwhelm you by pouring out too much at a time. My respects to Griffon, and best compliments to M. Leclerc." *

In this confidential strain the mother and the son carried on their correspondence. One year later, in 1814, the son left school, destined to fulfill all the promise of his childhood, and to hold thenceforth a more important place in the life and occupations of his parents. His influence soon began to tell on theirs, the more so that there existed no absolute divergence in their opinions. But he was more positive and bolder than his parents, because he was not fettered by the ties of old memories and old affection. He felt no regret for the Emperor, and, although deeply moved by the sufferings

* Griffon was a little dog. M. Leclerc was a member of the Institute and Dean of the Faculty of Letters. He died a few years ago. At that time he was a professor at the Lycée Napoléon, and gave lessons to my father.

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of the French army, he witnessed the fall of the Empire, if not with joy, at least with indifference. To him, as to most talented young men of his time, it came as an emancipation. He eagerly embraced the first notions of constitutional order, which made their reappearance with the Bourbons. But he was struck by the ridiculous side of Royalist society. Many of the revived fashions and phrases * seemed to him to be mere foolery; he was disgusted by the abuse lavished upon the Emperor and the men of the Empire, but neither his parents nor he, although still a little suspicious of the new order of things, was seriously opposed to it. Neither the personal vexations which resulted from it, such as the deprivation of employment, the necessity of selling to great disadvantage a library which was the delight of my grandfather, and which lives in the recollection of lovers of books, nor a thousand other annoyances, could prevent their experiencing a sense of relief. They almost verified a celebrated saying of the Emperor, who, when at the zenith of his power, once asked those surrounding him what would be said after his death. They all hastened to answer in phrases of compliment or of flattery. But he interrupted them by exclaiming, "What! you are at a loss to know what people will say? They will say 'Ouf!'"

V.

It was difficult to attend to personal interests in those days; one could hardly help being diverted from them, and engrossed solely by the spectacle of France and Europe. Curiosity would naturally outweigh ambition in a family such as we are depicting. My grandfather did nevertheless think of entering the administration, and once more revived his project, hitherto doomed to disappointment, of gaining admittance to the Council of State; but he was as supine about it as before. Had he entered the administration, he would only have been following the example of the majority

* For a note by Count de Rémusat, see Appendix.

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of the former officials of the Empire, for the Bonapartist Opposition did not come into existence until the latter days of the Monarchy. The members of the Imperial family lived in constant and friendly intercourse with the new *régime*, or rather the reinstated old *régime*. The Empress Josephine was treated with great respect, and the Emperor Alexander frequently visited her at Malmaison. She wished to take up a dignified and fitting position, and she confided to her lady-in-waiting that she thought of asking the title of High Constable for her son Eugène, showing thereby that she scarcely understood the spirit of the Restoration. Queen Hortense, who afterward became the bitter enemy of the Bourbons, and was concerned in numerous conspiracies, obtained the Duchy of Saint Leu, for which she intended to return thanks in person to Louis XVIII. All projects of this kind had, however, to be abandoned; for the Empress Josephine was suddenly carried off by malignant sore throat in March, 1814, and the last link that bound my kinsfolk to the Bonaparte family was sundered for ever.

The Bourbons seemed to make a point of annoying and depressing those very persons whom their Government should have endeavored to conciliate, and by slow degrees a belief gained ground that their reign would be of short duration, and that France, just then more in love with equality than with liberty, would demand to be placed once more under the yoke which had seemed to be shattered; in fact, that the days of Imperial splendor and misery would return. It was, therefore, with less amazement than might be supposed that my grandfather learned one day from a friend that the Emperor had escaped from Elba and landed at Cannes. Historical events seem more astounding to those who read of them than to eye-witnesses. Those who knew Bonaparte could readily believe him capable of again putting France and Frenchmen in peril for the sake of a selfish scheme. His return was, however, a tremendous event, and every one had to think not only of the political future, but

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also of his own. Even those who, like M. de Rémusat, had not publicly taken any political side, and who only wanted to be left in repose and obscurity, had everything to lose, and were bound to provide against eventualities. The general suspense did not last long; even before the Emperor's entry into Paris, M. Réal came to announce to M. de Rémusat that he was sentenced to exile together with twelve or fifteen others, among whom was M. Pasquier.

An event still more serious than exile, and which left a deeper trace in my father's memory, occurred between the first news of the return of Napoleon and his arrival at the Tuileries. On the day after that on which the landing was publicly announced, Mme. de Nansouty hurried to her sister's house, full of dismay at all that she had been told of the persecution to which the opponents of the vindictive and all-powerful Emperor were about to be exposed. She told my grandparents that a rigorous inquisition by the police was to be put in action; that M. Pasquier apprehended molestation, and that everything in the house which could give rise to suspicion must be got rid of. My grandmother, who might not otherwise have thought of danger, remembered with alarm that a manuscript highly calculated to compromise her husband, her sister, her brother-in-law, and her friends, was in the house. For many years, probably from her first appearance at Court, she had been in the habit of taking notes daily of the events and conversations which came under her notice, while her memory of them was fresh. She had recorded nearly everything she saw and heard, at Paris, at St. Cloud, and at Malmaison. For twelve years she had transferred, not only events and circumstances, but studies of character and disposition, to the pages of her journal. This journal was kept in the form of a correspondence. It consisted of a series of letters, written from Court to a friend from whom nothing was concealed. The author well knew all the value of these fictitious letters, which recalled her whole life, with its most precious and most painful

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recollections. Ought she to risk, for what would appear to others only literary or sentimental selfishness, the peace, the liberty, nay, even the life of those she loved? No one was aware of the existence of this manuscript, except her husband and Mme. Chéron, the wife of the Prefect of that name, a very old and attached friend. Her thoughts turned to this lady, who had once before taken charge of the dangerous manuscript, and she hastened to seek her. Unfortunately Mme. Chéron was from home, and not likely to return for a considerable time. What was to be done? My grandmother came back, greatly distressed, and, without further reflection or delay, threw her manuscripts into the fire. My father came into the room just as she was burning the last sheets, somewhat cautiously, lest the flame should reach too high. He was then seventeen, and has often described the scene to me—the remembrance of it was most painful to him. He thought at first that his mother was merely destroying a copy of the memoirs, which he had never read, and that the precious original manuscript was safely concealed. He threw the last sheets into the fire with his own hand, attaching but little importance to the action. "Few deeds," he used to say, "after I learned all the truth, have I ever so bitterly regretted."

From the very first, the author and her son so deeply lamented what they had done—for they learned almost immediately that the sacrifice was uncalled for—that for years they could not speak of it between themselves or to my grandfather. The latter bore his exile with much philosophy. He was not forbidden to dwell in France, but only in Paris and its neighborhood, and it was decided that they should all await the passing of the storm in Languedoc, where he possessed an estate which he had bought back from the heirs of M. de Bastard, his wife's grandfather, and which had long been neglected. The family removed, therefore, to Laffitte, where my father afterward passed so many years, now in the midst of political agitation, again in quiet study. In after

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days he again came thither from exile; for the sufferings of good citizens from absolute power were not to be restricted to the year 1815, and Napoleons have returned to France from a greater distance than the Isle of Elba.

My grandfather started for Laffitte on March 13th, and his family joined him there a few days afterward. At Laffitte they passed the three months of that reign, shorter but still more fatal than the first, which has been called "The Hundred Days." There my father entered upon his literary career, not as yet producing original works, but translating Pope, Cicero, and Tacitus. His only original writings were his songs. The family lived quietly, unitedly, and almost happily, waiting the end of a tragedy of which they foresaw the *dénoument*, and at Laffitte they received the news of Waterloo. They heard at the same time of the abdication of Napoleon, and that M. de Rémusat was appointed Prefect of Haute-Garonne, by a decree of July 12, 1815. This appointment was quite to the taste of my grandfather, for it placed him once more in office, without involving him in the parade of a court; but it was less pleasing to his wife, who regretted Paris and her old friends there, and who dreaded the disturbances at Toulouse, at that time a prey to the violence of southern Royalism—"the White Terror," as it was then called.

The new Prefect immediately set out for Toulouse, and was greeted on his arrival with the news that General Ramel, notwithstanding that he had hoisted the white flag on the Capitol, had been assassinated. Such are the injustice and violence of party spirit, even when victorious; nay, especially when victorious!

But, however interesting this episode of our national troubles may be, it is not necessary to dwell on them here. The principal personage in these Memoirs is not the Prefect, but Mme. de Rémusat. My grandmother, anxious about the course of events, and perhaps afraid of the vehemence of her son's opinions, which were little suited to his father's

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official position, sent him back to Paris, to his great satisfaction.

Then ensued a correspondence between them which will make both of them known to us, and will perhaps depict the writer of these Memoirs more clearly than do the Memoirs themselves.

As, however, the latter work only is in question at present, it is not necessary to give in detail the history of the period subsequent to 1815. The administration of the department, which commenced under such gloomy auspices, was, for a period of nineteen months, extremely difficult. While the son, mixing in very Liberal society in Paris, adopted the opinions of advanced constitutional Royalism, which did little more than tolerate the Bourbons, the father, amid totally different surroundings, underwent a similar mental process, and placed himself by word and deed in the front rank of those officials of the King's Government who were the least Royalist and the most Liberal. He was a just and moderate man, a lover of law, neither an aristocrat nor a bigot. The people of Toulouse were all that he was not; nevertheless he was successful there, and left behind him a kindly memory, which lapsed as the men of his time disappeared, but of which my father has more than once found traces. These early days of constitutional liberty, even in a province which did not afterward put its theories boldly in practice, are curious to contemplate.

The light of that liberty illumined all that the Empire had left in darkness. Opinions, ideas, hatred, passions, came to life. The Government of the Bourbons was represented by a married priest, M. de Talleyrand, and a regicide Jacobin, M. Fouché; but even they could not oppose the reactionary tendency of the time, and the Liberal policy did not triumph until the accession of MM. Decazes, Pasquier, Molé, and Royer-Collard to the ministry, and the passing of the famous decree of the 5th of September. The new policy was of course advantageous to those who had practiced it be-

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forehand, and there could be no ill will toward the Prefect on account of the failure of the Liberal party in the elections of Haute-Garonne. So soon as the ministry was firmly established, and as M. Lainé had succeeded M. de Vaublanc, my grandfather was appointed Prefect of Lille. My father records in a letter already quoted the effect of these events on the mind of Mme. de Rémusat:

"The nomination of my father to Lille brought my mother back into the midst of the great stir of public opinion, which was soon to declare itself as it had not done since 1789. Her intelligence, her reason, all her feelings and all her convictions, were about to make a great step in advance. The Empire, after awakening her interest in public affairs and enabling her to understand them, subsequently directed her mind toward a high moral aim, by inspiring her with a horror of tyranny. Hence came her desire for a government of order, founded on law, reason, and the spirit of the nation; hence a certain leaning toward the forms of the English constitution. Her stay at Toulouse and the reaction of 1815 gave her such a knowledge of social realities as she could never have acquired in the *salons* of Paris, enlightening her as to the results and the causes of the Revolution, and the needs and sentiments of the nation. She understood, in a general way, on which side lay true help, strength, life, and right. She learned that a new France had been called into existence, and what it was, and that it was for and by this new France that government must be carried on."

VI.

My grandmother's stay at Lille was occasionally varied by visits to her son in Paris. The pleasures of society were but a prelude to the literary success that he achieved a few months later; and indeed he was already practicing composition in his frequent letters to his mother on politics and literature. Mme. de Rémusat had more leisure at Lille than

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in Paris, and, although her health was still delicate, she indulged her taste for intellectual pursuits. Hitherto she had written nothing but the Memoirs that she had afterward destroyed, and a few short tales and essays. In the leisure of a country life she now attempted a romance in the form of letters, called "Les Lettrés Espagnols, ou l'Ambitieux." While she was working at this with ardor and success, the posthumous work of Mme. de Staël, "Considérations sur la Révolution Française," came out in 1818, and made a great impression on her. Now that sixty years have elapsed, it is difficult for us to realize the extraordinary effect of Mme. de Staël's eloquent dissertation on the principles of the Revolution. The opinions of the author, then quite novel, are now merely noble truisms obvious to all. But in the days that immediately followed the Empire they were something more. Everything was then new, and the younger generation, who had undergone twenty years of tyranny, had to learn over again that which their fathers had known so well in 1789.

My grandmother was especially struck by the eloquent pages in which the author gives somewhat declamatory expression to her hatred of Napoleon. Mme. de Rémusat felt a certain sympathy with the author's sentiments, but she could not forget that at one time she had thought differently. People who are fond of writing are easily tempted into explaining their conduct and feelings on paper. She conceived a strong desire to arrange all her reminiscences, to describe the Empire as she had seen it, and how she had at first loved and admired, next condemned and dreaded, afterward suspected and hated, and finally renounced it. The Memoirs she had destroyed in 1815 would have been the most accurate exposition of this succession of events, situations, and feelings. It was vain to think of rewriting them, but it was possible, with the help of a good memory and an upright intention, to compose others which should be equally sincere. Full of this project, she wrote to her son (May 27, 1818):

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"I have taken up a new notion. You must know that I wake every morning at six o'clock, and that I write regularly from that hour until half-past nine. Well, I was sitting up with the manuscript of my 'Lettrés Espagnols' all scattered about me, when certain chapters of Mme. de Staël's book came into my head. I flung my romance aside, and took up a clean sheet of paper, bitten with the idea that I must write about Bonaparte. On I went, describing the death of the Duke d'Enghien and that dreadful week I spent at Malmaison; and, as I am an emotional person, I seemed to be living all through that time over again. Words and events came back of themselves; between yesterday and to-day I have written twenty pages, and am somewhat agitated in consequence."

The same circumstance which reawakened the recollections of the mother aroused the literary tastes of the son; and while he was publishing an article on Mme. de Staël in the "Archives," * his first appearance in print, he wrote as follows to his mother on the same date, May 27, 1818. Their respective letters crossed on the road:

"'All honor to the sincere!' This book, my dear mother, has renewed my regret that you have burned your Memoirs, and has made me most anxious that you should retrieve that loss. You really owe this to yourself, to us, to the interests of truth. Read up the old almanacs; study the 'Moniteur' page by page; get back your old letters from your friends, and go over them, especially those to my father. Try to remember not only the details of events, but your own impressions of them. Try to resuscitate the views you formerly held, even the illusions you have lost; recall your very errors. Show how you, with many other honorable and sensible people, indignant and disgusted with the horrors of the

* "Archives Philosophiques, Politiques et Littéraires," vol. v., Paris, 1818. My father reprinted this article in the collection entitled "Critiques et Études Littéraires, ou Passé et Présent," par Ch. de Rémusat. 2 vols., 12mo. Paris, 1857.

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Revolution, were carried away by natural aversions, and beguiled by enthusiasm for one man, which was in reality highly patriotic. Explain how we had all of us become, as it were, strangers to political life. We had no dread of the empire of an individual; we went out to meet it. Then show how this man either became corrupt, or else displayed his true character as his power increased. Tell how it unfortunately happened that, as you lost one by one your illusions concerning him, you became more and more dependent, and how the less you submitted to him in heart, the more you were obliged to obey him in fact; how at last, after having believed in the uprightness of his policy because you were mistaken in himself, your discovery of his true character led you to a correct view of his system; and how moral indignation finally brought you by degrees to what I may call a *political hatred* of him. This, my dear mother, is what I entreat of you to do. You see what I mean, do you not? and you will do it."

Two days after, on the 30th of May, my grandmother replied as follows:

"Is it not wonderful how perfectly we understand each other? I am reading the book, and I am as much struck by it as you are. I regret my poor Memoirs for new reasons, and I take up my pen again without quite knowing whither it will lead me; for, my dear child, this task which you have set me, and which of itself is tempting, is also formidable. I shall, however, set about reviving my impressions of certain epochs, at first without order or sequence, just as things come back to me. You may trust me to set down the very truth. Yesterday, when I was alone and at my desk, I was trying to recall my first meeting with this wretched man. A tide of remembrance rushed over me, and that which you so justly call my *political* hatred was ready to fade away and give place to my former illusions."

A few days later, on the 8th of June, 1818, she dwells on the difficulties of her task:

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"Do you know that I need all my courage to do as you tell me? I am like a person who, having spent ten years at the galleys, is asked to write an account of how he passed his time. My heart sinks when I recall old memories. There is pain both in my past fancies and in my present feelings. You are right in saying I love truth; but it follows that I can not, like so many others, recall the past with impunity, and I assure you that, for the last week, I have risen quite saddened from the desk at which you and Mme. de Staël have placed me. I could not reveal these feelings to any one but you. Others would not understand, and would only laugh at me."

On the 28th of September and the 8th of October of the same year, she writes to her son:

"If I were a man, I should certainly devote a part of my life to studying the League; being only a woman, I confine myself to verbal utterances about you know whom. What a man! what a man! It terrifies me to retrace it all. It was my misfortune to be very young when I was placed near him; I did not reflect on what passed before me; but now that we are both older, I and the generation to which I belong, my memories move me more than did events at that time. If you come . . . I think you will find that I have not lost much time this summer. I have already written nearly five hundred pages, and I am going to write much more; the task lengthens as I work at it. Afterward much time and patience will be required to put all this material in order. Perhaps I shall never have either one or the other; if so, that will be your business when I shall be no longer here."

"Your father," she writes again, "says that he does not know of any one to whom I could show what I am writing. He declares that no one excels me in 'the talent for being true' as he expresses it. So, therefore, I write for nobody in particular. Some day you will find my manuscripts among my effects, and you can do what you like with them."

On the 8th of October, 1818, she writes: "There is a

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thought that sometimes troubles me. I say to myself, 'Suppose some day my son publishes this, what will be said of me?' Then the fear seizes me that I shall be held to have been malicious, or at least ill-natured, and I rack my brain for something to praise. But this man (Bonaparte) was such a ruthless destroyer of all worth and we were brought so low that I am straitened by the demands of truth, and I grow quite disheartened."

These fragments of her letters indicate the spirit in which the Memoirs of Mme. de Rémusat were written; and it was not that of a literary pastime, nor a pleasure of the imagination. Her motive was neither ambition to be an author, nor the desire to put forward an apology. The love of truth, the political spectacle before her eyes, and the influence of a son who became day by day more strongly confirmed in those Liberal opinions which were destined to be the delight and the honor of his life—these things gave her courage to persevere in her task for more than two years. She understood that noble policy which places the rights of man above the rights of the State. Nor was this all. As often happens to persons deeply engaged in intellectual work, her task became plain and easy, and she led a more active life than at any previous time. In spite of failing health, she constantly traveled from Lille to Paris; she acted the part of Elmire in "Tartuffe" at M. Molé's house at Champlâtreux; she commenced a work on the Women of the Seventeenth Century, which she afterward expanded into her "Essai sur l'Éducation des Femmes"; she supplied Dupuytren with material for a panegyric on Corvisart, and she even published a tale in the "Lycée Français." *

In the midst of the happiness which she derived from her quiet life and her busy mind, from her husband's official and her son's literary success, her health failed. First came a weakness of the eyes, which, without actually threatening

* "Lycée Français, ou Mélange de Littérature et de Critique," t. iii., p. 281 (1820).

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her sight, occasioned her both pain and inconvenience; then followed a general delicacy of the system, in which the stomach was chiefly affected. After alternate changes for the better and the worse, her son brought her to Paris on the 28th of November, 1821, in a suffering condition, which was alarming to those who loved her, but did not appear to the doctors to indicate immediate danger. Broussais, however, took a desponding view of her case, and my father was then first struck by the power of induction to which the discoveries and the errors of that eminent man are alike due. Notwithstanding her illness, she occupied herself on her return to Lille with literary and historical work, and received company, including a great number of political personages. She was still able to feel interested in the fall of the Duke Decazes, and she foresaw that the coming into power of M. de Villèle—that is to say, of the ultras or reactionaries, as they are now called—would render it impossible for her husband to retain the Prefecture of Lille; and, in fact, he was superseded on the 9th of January, 1822. Before this occurred, Mme. de Rémusat was no more. She expired suddenly in the night, December 16, 1821, aged forty-one years.

She bequeathed to her son a lifelong sorrow, and to her friends the memory of a remarkable and charming woman. Not one of those friends is now living; M. Pasquier, M. Molé, M. Guizot, and M. Leclerc have recently passed away. I render her memory the truest homage in my power by the publication of these unfinished Memoirs, which, with the exception of a few chapters, she was unable to read over or correct. The work was to have been divided into five parts, corresponding with five distinct epochs. She completed only three, which treat of the interval between 1802 and 1808; that is to say, from her first appearance at Court to the breaking out of the war in Spain. The unwritten portions would have described the period that elapsed between that war and the divorce (1808–1809), and the five following years, ending with the fall of the Emperor. I am well

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aware that a work of the nature of this one is calculated to bring down upon both its author and its editor much blame, many insinuations, and a great deal of political animosity. Its apparent contradictions will be held up to observation, rather than the interesting analogy of the opinions of three generations which it sets forth, and the difference in the times. It will be a theme for wonder that any man could be a chamberlain and any woman a lady-in-waiting, and yet that both could be so far from servile, so liberal, so little shocked by the 18th Brumaire, so patriotic, so much fascinated by that man of genius, Bonaparte, and so severe upon his faults, so clear-sighted respecting the majority of the members of the Imperial family, so indulgent or so blind with regard to others who have left an equally fatal impress on our national history. It will, however, be difficult to avoid doing justice to the sincerity, the honesty, and the intelligence of the author, or to read the book without deriving from it an increased aversion to absolute power, a keener perception of its sophistry, and the hollowness of the apparent prosperity with which it dazzles public opinion. These impressions I have especially derived from it, and I desire to retain them. It would have been sufficient preface to this book had I written only those words which my father uttered, sixty years ago, when, on reading Mme. de Staël, he asked his mother to tell him the story of the cruel years of the First Empire: "All honor to the sincere!"

PAUL DE RÉMUSAT.

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MEMOIRS OF

MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

INTRODUCTION.

PORTRAITS AND ANECDOTES.

Now that I am about to commence these Memoirs, I think it well to precede them by some observations on the character of the Emperor, and the various members of his family respectively. These observations will help me in the difficult task I am about to undertake, by aiding me to recall the impressions of the last twelve years. I shall begin with Bonaparte himself. I am far from saying that he always appeared to me in the light in which I see him now; my opinions have progressed, even as he did; but I am so far from being influenced by personal feelings, that I do not think it is possible for me to deviate from the exact truth.

Napoleon Bonaparte is of low stature, and rather ill-proportioned; his bust is too long, and so shortens the rest of his figure. He has thin chestnut hair, his eyes are grayish blue, and his skin, which was yellow while he was slight, became in later years a dead white without any color. His forehead, the setting of his eye, the line of his nose—all that is beautiful, and reminds one of an antique medallion. His mouth, which is thin-lipped, becomes agreeable when he laughs; the teeth are regular. His chin is short, and his

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jaw heavy and square. He has well-formed hands and feet; I mention them particularly, because he thought a good deal of them.

He has an habitual slight stoop. His eyes are dull, giving to his face when in repose a melancholy and meditative expression. When he is excited with anger his looks are fierce and menacing. Laughter becomes him; it makes him look more youthful and less formidable. It is difficult not to like him when he laughs, his countenance improves so much. He was always simple in his dress, and generally wore the uniform of his own guard. He was cleanly rather from habit than from a liking for cleanliness; he bathed often, sometimes in the middle of the night, because he thought the practice good for his health. But, apart from this, the precipitation with he did everything did not admit of his clothes being put on carefully; and on gala days and full-dress occasions his servants were obliged to consult together as to when they might snatch a moment to dress him.

He could not endure the wearing of ornaments; the slightest constraint was insupportable to him. He would tear off or break anything that gave him the least annoyance; and sometimes the poor valet who had occasioned him a passing inconvenience would receive violent proof of his anger. I have said there was a sort of fascination in the smile of Bonaparte; but, during all the time I was in the habit of seeing him, he rarely put forth that charm. Gravity was the foundation of his character; not the gravity of a dignified and noble manner, but that which arises from profound thought. In his youth he was a dreamer; later in life he became a moody, and later still an habitually ill-tempered man. When I first began to know him well, he was exceedingly fond of all that induces reverie—Ossian, the twilight, melancholy music. I have seen him enraptured by the murmur of the wind, I have heard him talk with enthusiasm of the moaning of the sea, and he was tempted sometimes to believe that nocturnal apparitions were not beyond the bounds

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of possibility; in fact, he had a leaning to certain superstitions. When, on leaving his study in the evening, he went into Mme. Bonaparte's drawing-room, he would sometimes have the candles shaded with white gauze, desire us to keep profound silence, and amuse himself by telling or hearing ghost stories; or he would listen to soft, sweet music executed by Italian singers, accompanied only by a few instruments lightly touched. Then he would fall into a reverie which all respected, no one venturing to move or stir from his or her place. When he aroused himself from that state, which seemed to procure him a sort of repose, he was generally more serene and more communicative. He liked then to talk about the sensations he had experienced. He would explain the effect music had upon him; he always preferred that of Paisiello, because he said it was monotonous, and that impressions which repeat themselves are the only ones that take possession of us. The geometrical turn of his mind disposed him to analyze even his emotions. No man has ever meditated more deeply than Bonaparte on the "wherefore" that rules human actions. Always aiming at something, even in the least important acts of his life, always laying bare to himself a secret motive for each of them, he could never understand that natural nonchalance which leads some persons to act without a project and without an aim. He always judged others by himself, and was often mistaken, his conclusions and the actions which ensued upon them both proving erroneous.

Bonaparte was deficient in education and in manners; it seemed as if he must have been destined either to live in a tent where all men are equal, or upon a throne where everything is permitted. He did not know how either to enter or to leave a room; he did not know how to make a bow, how to rise, or how to sit down. His questions were abrupt, and so also was his manner of speech. Spoken by him, Italian loses all its grace and sweetness. Whatever language he speaks, it seems always to be a foreign tongue to him; he

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appears to force it to express his thoughts. And then, as any rigid rule becomes an insupportable annoyance to him, every liberty which he takes pleases him as though it were a victory, and he would never yield even to grammar. He used to say that in his youth he had liked reading romances as well as studying the exact sciences; and probably he was influenced by so incongruous a mixture. Unfortunately, he had met with the worst kind of romances, and retained so keen a remembrance of the pleasure they had given him that, when he married the Archduchess Marie Louise, he gave her "Hippolyte, Comte de Douglas," and "Les Contemporains,"* so that, as he said, she might form an idea of refined feeling, and also of the customs of society.

In trying to depict Bonaparte, it would be necessary, following the analytical forms of which he was so fond, to separate into three very distinct parts his soul, his heart, and his mind; for no one of these ever blended completely with the others. Although very remarkable for certain intellectual qualities, no man, it must be allowed, was ever less lofty of soul. There was no generosity, no true greatness in him. I have never known him to admire, I have never known him to comprehend, a fine action. He always regarded every indication of a good feeling with suspicion; he did not value sincerity; and he did not hesitate to say that he recognized the superiority of a man by the greater or less degree of cleverness with which he used the art of lying. On the occasion of his saying this, he added, with great complacency, that when he was a child one of his uncles had predicted that he should govern the world, because he was an habitual liar. "M. de Metternich," he added, "approaches to being a statesman—he lies very well."

All Bonaparte's methods of government were selected from among those which have a tendency to debase men. He dreaded the ties of affection; he endeavored to isolate

* "Les Contemporains" was a romance, or rather a series of stories or portraits, by Rétif de la Bretonne.

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every one; he never sold a favor without awakening a sense of uneasiness, for he held that the true way to attach the recipients to himself was by compromising them, and often even by blasting them in public opinion. He could not pardon virtue until he had succeeded in weakening its effect by ridicule. He can not be said to have truly loved glory, for he never hesitated to prefer success to it; thus, although he was audacious in good fortune, and although he pushed it to its utmost limits, he was timid and troubled when threatened with reverses. Of generous courage he was not capable; and, indeed, on that head one would hardly venture to tell the truth so plainly as he has told it himself, by an admission recorded in an anecdote which I have never forgotten. One day, after his defeat at Leipsic, and when, as he was about to return to Paris, he was occupied in collecting the remains of his army for the defense of our frontiers, he was talking to M. de Talleyrand of the ill success of the Spanish war, and of the difficulty in which it had involved him. He spoke openly of his own position, not with the noble frankness that does not fear to own a fault, but with that haughty sense of superiority which releases one from the necessity of dissimulation. At this interview, in the midst of his plain speaking, M. de Talleyrand said to him suddenly, "But how is it? You consult me as if we had not quarreled."

Bonaparte answered, "Ah, circumstances! circumstances! Let us leave the past and the future alone. I want to hear what you think of the present moment."

"Well," replied M. de Talleyrand, "there is only one thing you can do. You have made a mistake: you must say so; try to say so nobly. Proclaim, therefore, that being a King by the choice of the people, elected by the nations, it has never been your design to set yourself against them. Say that, when you began the war with Spain, you believed you were about to deliver the people from the yoke of an odious minister, who was encouraged by the weakness of his

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prince; but that, on closer observation, you perceive that the Spaniards, although aware of the faults of their King, are none the less attached to his dynasty, which you are therefore about to restore to them, so that it may not be said you ever opposed a national aspiration. After that proclamation, restore King Ferdinand to liberty, and withdraw your troops. Such an avowal, made in a lofty tone, and when the enemy are still hesitating on our frontier, can only do you honor; and you are still too strong for it to be regarded as a cowardly act."

"A cowardly act!" replied Bonaparte; "what does that matter to me? Understand that I should not fail to commit one, if it were useful to me. In reality, there is nothing really noble or base in this world; I have in my character all that can contribute to secure my power, and to deceive those who think they know me. Frankly, I am base, essentially base. I give you my word that I should feel no repugnance to commit what would be called by the world a dishonorable action; my secret tendencies, which are, after all, those of nature, opposed to certain affectations of greatness with which I have to adorn myself, give me infinite resources with which to baffle every one. Therefore, all I have to do now is to consider whether your advice agrees with my present policy, and to try and find out besides," he added (says M. de Talleyrand), with a satanic smile, "whether you have not some private interest in urging me to take this step."

Another anecdote which bears on the same characteristic will not be out of place here. Bonaparte, when on the point of setting out for Egypt, went to see M. de Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Directory. "I was in bed, being ill," said M. de Talleyrand. "Bonaparte sat down near me, and divulged to me all the dreams of his youthful imagination. I was interested in him because of the activity of his mind, and also on account of the obstacles which I was aware would be placed in his way by

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secret enemies of whom I knew. He told me of the difficulty in which he was placed for want of money, and that he did not know where to get any. 'Stay,' I said to him; 'open my desk. You will find there a hundred thousand francs which belong to me. They are yours for the present; you may repay the money when you return.' Bonaparte threw himself on my neck, and I was really delighted to witness his joy. When he became Consul, he gave me back the money I had lent him; but he asked me one day, 'What interest could you have had in lending me that money? I have thought about it a hundred times since then, and have never been able to make out your object.' 'I had none,' I replied. 'I was feeling very ill: it was quite possible I might never see you again; but you were young, you had impressed me very strongly, and I felt impelled to render you a service without any afterthought whatsoever.' 'In that case,' said Bonaparte, 'and if it was really done without any design, you acted a dupe's part.'"

According to the order I have laid down, I ought now to speak of Bonaparte's heart; but, if it were possible to believe that a being, in every other way similar to ourselves, could exist without that portion of our organization which makes us desire to love and to be loved, I should say that in his creation the heart was left out. Perhaps, however, the truth was that he succeeded in suppressing it completely. He was always too much engrossed by himself to be influenced by any sentiment of affection, no matter of what kind. He almost ignored the ties of blood and the rights of nature; I do not know that even paternity weighed with him. It seemed, at least, that he did not regard it as his primary relation with his son. One day, at breakfast, when, as was often the case, Talma had been admitted to see him, the young Napoleon was brought to him. The Emperor took the child on his knee, and, far from caressing, amused himself by slapping him, though not so as to hurt him; then, turning to Talma, he said, "Talma, tell me what I am doing?" Talma, as

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may be supposed, did not know what to say. "You do not see it," continued the Emperor; "I am slapping a King."

Notwithstanding his habitual hardness, Bonaparte was not entirely without experience of love. But, good heavens! what manner of sentiment was it in his case? A sensitive person forgets self in love, and becomes almost transformed; but to a man of the stamp of Bonaparte it only supplies an additional sort of despotism. The Emperor despised women, and contempt can not exist together with love. He regarded their weakness as an unanswerable proof of their inferiority, and the power they have acquired in society as an intolerable usurpation—a result and an abuse of the progress of that civilization which, as M. de Talleyrand said, was always his personal enemy. On this account Bonaparte was under restraint in the society of women; and, as every kind of restraint put him out of humor, he was always awkward in their presence, and never knew how to talk to them. It is true that the women with whom he was acquainted were not calculated to change his views of the sex. We may easily imagine the nature of his youthful experiences. In Italy morals were utterly depraved, and the general licentiousness was augmented by the presence of the French army. When he returned to France society was entirely broken up and dispersed. The circle that surrounded the Directory was a corrupt one, and the Parisian women to whose society he was admitted were vain and frivolous, the wives of men of business and contractors. When he became Consul, and made his generals and his aides-de-camp marry, or ordered them to bring their wives to Court, the only women he had about him were timid and silent girls, newly married, or the wives of his former comrades, suddenly withdrawn from obscurity by the good fortune of their husbands, and ill able to conform to the change in their position.

I am disposed to believe that Bonaparte, almost always exclusively occupied by politics, was never awakened to love except by vanity. He thought nothing of a woman except

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while she was beautiful, or at least young. He would probably have been willing to subscribe to the doctrine that, in a well-organized country, we should be killed—just as certain kinds of insects are destined by nature to a speedy death, so soon as they have accomplished the task of maternity. Yet Bonaparte had some affection for his first wife; and, if he was ever really stirred by any emotion, it was by her and for her. Even a Bonaparte can not completely escape from every influence, and a man's character is composed, not of what he is always, but of what he is most frequently.

Bonaparte was young when he first made the acquaintance of Mme. de Beauharnais, who was greatly superior to the rest of the circle in which she moved, both by reason of the name she bore and from the elegance of her manners. She attached herself to him, and flattered his pride; she procured him a step in rank; he became accustomed to associate the idea of her influence with every piece of good fortune which befell him. This superstition, which she kept up very cleverly, exerted great power over him for a long time; it even induced him more than once to delay the execution of his projects of divorce. When he married Mme. de Beauharnais, Bonaparte believed that he was allying himself to a very great lady; his marriage, therefore, was one conquest the more. I shall give further details of the charm she exercised over him when I have to speak more particularly of her.

Notwithstanding his preference for her, I have seen him in love two or three times, and it was on those occasions that he exhibited the full measure of the despotism of his character. How irritated he became at the least obstacle! How roughly he put aside the jealous remonstrances of his wife! "It is your place," he said, "to submit to all my fancies, and you ought to think it quite natural that I should allow myself amusements of this kind. I have a right to answer all your complaints by an eternal I. I am a person apart; I will not be dictated to by any one." But he soon

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began to desire to exercise over the object of his passing preference an authority equal to that by which he silenced his wife. Astonished that any one should have any ascendancy over him, he speedily became angry with the audacious individual, and he would abruptly get rid of the object of his brief passion, having let the public into the transparent secret of his success.

The intellect of Bonaparte was most remarkable. It would be difficult, I think, to find among men a more powerful or comprehensive mind. It owed nothing to education; for, in reality, he was ignorant, reading but little, and that hurriedly. But he quickly seized upon the little he learned, and his imagination developed it so extensively that he might easily have passed for a well-educated man.

His intellectual capacity seemed to be vast, from the number of subjects he could take in and classify without fatigue. With him one idea gave birth to a thousand, and a word would lift his conversation into elevated regions of fancy, in which exact logic did not indeed keep him company, but in which his intellect never failed to shine.

It was always a great pleasure to me to hear him talk, or rather to hear him hold forth, for his conversation was composed generally of long monologues; not that he objected to replies when he was in a good humor, but, for many reasons, it was not always easy to answer him. His Court, which for a long time was entirely military, listened to his least word with the respect that is paid to the word of command; and afterward it became so numerous that any individual undertaking to refute him, or to carry on a dialogue with him, felt like an actor before an audience. I have said that he spoke badly, but his language was generally animated and brilliant; his grammatical inaccuracies sometimes lent his sentences an unexpected strength, very suitable to the originality of his ideas. He required no interlocutor to warm him up. He would dash into a subject, and go on for a long time, careful to notice, however, whether he was followed, and

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pleased with those who comprehended and applauded him. Formerly, to know how to listen to him was a sure and easy way of pleasing him. Like an actor who becomes excited by the effect he produces, Bonaparte enjoyed the admiration he watched for closely in the faces of his audience. I remember well how, because he interested me very much when he spoke, and I listened to him with pleasure, he proclaimed me a woman of intellect, although at that time I had not addressed two consecutive sentences to him.

He was very fond of talking about himself, and criticised himself on certain points, just as another person might have done. Rather than fail to make the most out of his own character, he would not have hesitated to subject it to the most searching analysis. He used often to say that a real politician knows how to calculate even the smallest profits that he can make out of his defects; and M. de Talleyrand carried that reflection even further. I once heard him say, "That devil of a man deceives one on all points. His very passions mislead, for he manages to dissemble them even when they really exist." I can recall an incident which will show how, when he found it useful, he could pass from the most complete calm to the most violent anger.

A little while before our last rupture with England, a rumor was spread that war was about to recommence, and that the ambassador, Lord Whitworth, was preparing to leave Paris. Once a month the First Consul was in the habit of receiving, in Mme. Bonaparte's apartments, the ambassadors and their wives. This reception was held in great pomp. The foreigners were ushered into a drawing-room, and when they were all there the First Consul would appear, accompanied by his wife. Both were attended by a prefect and a lady of the palace. To each of them the ambassadors and their wives were introduced by name. Mme. Bonaparte would take a seat; the First Consul would keep up the conversation for a longer or a shorter time, according to his convenience, and then withdraw with a slight bow. A few

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days before the breach of the peace, the Corps Diplomatique had met as usual at the Tuileries. While they were waiting, I went to Mme. Bonaparte's apartment, and entered the dressing-room, where she was finishing her toilet.

The First Consul was sitting on the floor, playing with little Napoleon, the eldest son of his brother Louis. He presently began to criticise his wife's dress, and also mine, giving us his opinion on every detail of our costume. He seemed to be in the best possible humor. I remarked this, and said to him that, judging by appearances, the letters the ambassadors would have to write, after the approaching audience, would breathe nothing but peace and concord. Bonaparte laughed, and went on playing with his little nephew.

By-and-by he was told that the company had arrived. Then he rose quickly, the gayety vanished from his face, and I was struck by the severe expression that suddenly replaced it: he seemed to grow pale at will, his features contracted; and all this in less time than it takes me to describe it. "Let us go, mesdames," said he, in a troubled voice; and then he walked on quickly, entered the drawing-room, and, without bowing to any one, advanced to the English ambassador. To him he began to complain bitterly of the proceedings of his Government. His anger seemed to increase every minute; it soon reached a height which terrified the assembly; the hardest words, the most violent threats, were poured forth by his trembling lips. No one dared to move. Mme. Bonaparte and I looked at each other, dumb with astonishment, and every one trembled. The impassibility of the Englishman was even disconcerted, and it was with difficulty he could find words to answer.

Another anecdote* which sounds strange, but is very

* The Abbé de Pradt relates that on one occasion, after a violent scene, the Emperor came to him and said: "You thought me terribly angry? Undeceive yourself; with me anger never goes beyond this." And he passed his hand across his throat, thus indicating that his passion never rose high enough to disturb his head.

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characteristic, proves how completely he could command himself when he chose to do so.

When he was traveling, or even during a campaign, he never failed to indulge in gallantries which he regarded as a short respite from business or battles. His brother-in-law Murat, and his grand-marshal Duroc, were charged with the task of procuring him the means of gratifying his passing fancies. On the occasion of his first entry into Poland, Murat, who had preceded him to Warsaw, was ordered to find for the Emperor, who would shortly arrive, a young and pretty mistress, and to select her from among the nobility. He acquitted himself cleverly of this commission, and induced a noble young Polish lady, who was married to an old man, to comply with the Emperor's wishes. No one knows what means he employed, or what were his promises; but at last the lady consented to go in the evening to the castle near Warsaw, where the Emperor was lodged.

The fair one arrived rather late at her destination. She has herself narrated this adventure, and she acknowledges, what we can readily believe, that she arrived agitated and trembling.

The Emperor was in his cabinet. The lady's arrival was announced to him; but, without disturbing himself, he ordered her to be conducted to her apartment, and offered supper and a bath, adding that afterward she might retire to rest if she chose. Then he quietly went on writing until a late hour at night.

At last, his business being finished, he proceeded to the apartment where he had been so long waited for, and presented himself with all the manner of a master who disdains useless preliminaries. Without losing a moment, he began a singular conversation on the political situation of Poland, questioning the young lady as if she had been a police agent, and demanding some very circumstantial information respecting the great Polish nobles who were then in Warsaw. He inquired particularly into their opinions and their present in-

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terests, and prolonged this extraordinary interrogatory for a long time. The astonishment of a woman twenty years of age, who was not prepared for such a cross-examination, may be imagined. She answered him as well as she could, and only when she could tell him no more did he seem to remember that Murat had promised, in his name, an interview of a more tender nature.

This extraordinary wooing did not, however, prevent the young Polish lady from becoming attached to the Emperor, for their *liaison* was prolonged during several campaigns. Afterward the fair Pole came to Paris, where a son was born, who became the object of the hopes of Poland, the rallying point of Polish dreams of independence.

I saw his mother when she was presented at the Imperial Court, where she at first excited the jealousy of Mme. Bonaparte; but after the divorce she became the intimate friend of the repudiated Empress at Malmaison, whither she often brought her son. It is said that she was faithful to the Emperor in his misfortunes, and that she visited him more than once at the Isle of Elba. He found her again in France when he made his last and fatal appearance there. But, after his second fall (I do not know at what time she became a widow), she married again, and she died in Paris this year (1818). I had these details from M. de Talleyrand.

I will now resume my sketch. Bonaparte carried selfishness so far that it was not easy to move him about anything that did not concern himself. He was, however, occasionally surprised, as it were, into impulses of tenderness; but they were very fugitive, and always ended in ill humor. It was not uncommon to see him moved even to the point of shedding a few tears; they seemed to arise from nervous irritation, of which they became the crisis. "I have," he said, "very unmanageable nerves, and at these times, if my blood did not always flow slowly, I think I should be very likely to go mad." I know, indeed, from Corvisart, that his pulse beat more slowly than is usual for a man's. Bonaparte

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never felt what is commonly called giddiness, and he always said that the expression, "My head is going round," conveyed no meaning to him. It was not only from the ease with which he yielded to all his impulses that he often used language which was painful and distressing to those whom he addressed, but also because he felt a secret pleasure in exciting fear, and in harassing the more or less trembling individuals before him. He held that uncertainty stimulates zeal, and therefore he rarely displayed satisfaction with either persons or things. Admirably served, always obeyed on the moment, he would still find fault, and keep everybody in the palace in dread of his displeasure about some small detail. If the easy flow of his conversation had established for the time a sense of ease, he would suddenly imagine that it might be abused, and by a hard and imperious word put the person whom he had welcomed and encouraged in his or her place—that is to say, in fear. He hated repose for himself and grudged it to others. When M. de Rémusat had arranged one of those magnificent fêtes where all the arts were laid under contribution for his pleasure, I was never asked whether the Emperor was pleased, but whether he had grumbled more or less. His service was the severest of toil. He has been heard to say, in one of those moments when the strength of conviction appeared to weigh upon him, "The truly happy man is he who hides from me in the country, and when I die the world will utter a great '*Ouf!*'"

I have said that Bonaparte was incapable of generosity; and yet his gifts were immense, and the rewards he bestowed gigantic. But, when he paid for a service, he made it plain that he expected to buy another, and a vague uneasiness as to the conditions of the bargain always remained. There was also a good deal of caprice in his gifts, so that they rarely excited gratitude. Moreover, he required that the money he distributed should all be expended, and he rather liked people to contract debts, because it kept them in a state of de-

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pendence. His wife gave him complete satisfaction in the latter particular, and he would never put her affairs in order, so that he might keep the power of making her uneasy in his hands. At one time he settled a considerable revenue on M. de Rémusat, that we might keep what is called open house, and receive a great many foreigners. We were very exact in the first expenses demanded by a great establishment. A little while after, I had the misfortune to lose my mother, and was forced to close my house. The Emperor then rescinded all his gifts, on the ground that we could not keep the engagement we had made, and he left us in what was really a position of embarrassment, caused entirely by his fugitive and burdensome gifts. I pause here. If I carry out the plan I have formed, my memory, carefully consulted, will furnish me by degrees with other anecdotes which will complete this sketch. What I have already written will suffice to convey an idea of the character of him with whom circumstances connected the best years of my life.

Bonaparte's Mother.

Mme. Bonaparte (*née* Ramolini) was married in 1767 to Charles Bonaparte, who belonged to one of the noble families of Corsica. It is said that there had been a *liaison* between her and M. de Marbeuf, governor of the island; and some went so far as to allege that Napoleon was the son of M. de Marbeuf. It is certain that he always showed kindness to the family of Marbeuf. However that may have been, the governor had Napoleon Bonaparte included among the number of noble children who were to be sent from Corsica to France, to be educated at a military school. He was placed at that of Brienne.

The English having become masters of Corsica in 1790, Mme. Bonaparte, a rich widow, retired to Marseilles with her other children. Their education had been much neglected, and, if we are to accept the recollections of the Marseillais as evidence, her daughters had not been brought up

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under the strict rule of a scrupulous morality. The Emperor, indeed, never pardoned the town of Marseilles for having been aware of the position his family occupied at that period, and the disparaging anecdotes of them imprudently repeated by certain Provençals seriously militated against the interests of the whole of Provence.

The widowed Mme. Bonaparte established herself at Paris on her son's attainment of power. She lived a retired life, amassing as much money as possible; she meddled in no public matters, and neither had nor wished to have any influence. Her son overawed her, as he did all the rest of the world. She was a woman of very ordinary intelligence, who, notwithstanding the rank in which events placed her, never did anything worthy of praise. After the fall of the Empire she retired to Rome, where she lived with her brother, Cardinal Fesch. It is said that he, in the first Italian campaign, showed himself eager to profit by the opportunity of founding his fortune which then presented itself. He acquired, received, or even took, it is said, a considerable quantity of pictures, statues, and valuable articles, which have since served to decorate his various residences. When he afterward became a Cardinal and Archbishop of Lyons, he devoted himself wholly to the duties of his two great offices, and in the end he acquired a most honorable reputation among the clergy. He often opposed the Emperor while his disputes with the Pope were pending, and was not one of the least obstacles to the execution of Bonaparte's wishes on the occasion of the futile attempt to hold a council at Paris. Either for political reasons or from religious motives, he made some opposition to the divorce; at least, the Empress Josephine believed him to have done so. I shall go more into details on this subject hereafter. The Cardinal has, since his retirement to Rome, preserved the unvarying favor of the Sovereign Pontiff.*

* Mme. Bonaparte, born in 1750, died in 1839. Cardinal Fesch, born at Ajaccio the 3d of January, 1763, died at Rome the 13th of May, 1839.—P. R.

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Joseph Bonaparte.

Joseph Bonaparte was born in 1768. He has a handsome face, is fond of the society of women, and has always been remarkable for having gentler manners than any of his brothers. Like them, however, he affects astute duplicity. His ambition, although less developed than that of Napoleon, has nevertheless come out under certain circumstances, and he has always shown capacity enough to be master of the situations in which he has been placed, difficult though they have often been. In 1805 Bonaparte wished to make Joseph King of Italy, requiring him, however, to renounce all claim to the succession to the throne of France. This Joseph refused to do. He always adhered tenaciously to what he called his rights, and believed himself destined to give the French repose from the turmoil in which they were kept by the over-activity of his brother. He understood better than Napoleon how to carry a point by fair means, but he failed to inspire confidence. He is amiable in domestic life; but he did not exhibit much ability, either on the throne of Naples or on that of Spain. It is true he was permitted to reign only as if he were Napoleon's lieutenant, and in neither country did he inspire personal esteem or arouse animosity.*

His wife, the daughter of a Marseilles merchant named Clary, is the simplest and the best woman in the world. Plain, common-looking, timid, and silent, she attracted no attention, either at the Emperor's Court, or when she successively wore those two crowns which she has apparently lost without regret. There are two daughters by this marriage. The family is now established in America. The sister of Mme. Bonaparte was married to General Bernadotte, now King of Sweden. She, who was not a commonplace person, had before her marriage been very much in love with Napoleon, and appears to have always preserved the memory

* Joseph Bonaparte died at Florence, the 28th of July, 1844.—P. R.

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of that feeling. It has been supposed that her hardly extinguished passion caused her obstinate refusal to leave France. She lives in Paris at present, where she leads a very retired life.*

Lucien Bonaparte.

Lucien Bonaparte has a great deal of ability. He displayed a taste for the arts and for certain kinds of literature at an early age. As a deputy from Corsica, some of his speeches in the Council of the Five Hundred were remarked at the time; among others, that which he made on the 22d of September, 1798, the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic. He there defined the oath that each member of the Council ought to take—to watch over the constitution and liberty, and to execrate any Frenchman who should endeavor to reëstablish royalty. On General Jourdan's expressing some fears relative to the rumors that the Council was menaced with a speedy overthrow, Lucien reminded them of the existence of a decree which pronounced outlawry on all who should attack the inviolability of the national representation. It is probable that all the time he had a secret understanding with his brother, and was awaiting like him the approach of the hour when they might lay the foundation for the elevation of their family. There were, however, some constitutional ideas in Lucien's head; and, perhaps, if he had been able to preserve any influence over his brother, he might have opposed the indefinite growth of arbitrary power. He succeeded in sending information to Napoleon in Egypt of the state of affairs in France; and, having thus hastened his brother's return, he aided him effectually, as is well known, in the revolution of the 18th Brumaire, 1799.

Lucien afterward became minister of the interior, then Ambassador to Spain, and in both capacities he gave offense to the First Consul. Bonaparte did not like to remember

* The Queen of Sweden died a few years ago, after having long lived in Paris, in the Rue d'Anjou, Saint Honoré.

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services which had been rendered to him, and Lucien was in the habit of reminding him of them in an aggressive manner during their frequent altercations.

While he was in Spain he became very intimate with the Prince of the Peace, and assisted to arrange the treaty of Badajoz,* which on that occasion saved Portugal from invasion.

He received a sum which has been estimated at five hundred millions of francs as a reward for his services. This was paid partly in money, and partly in diamonds. At this time he also formed a project of marriage between Bonaparte and an Infanta of Spain; but Napoleon, either from affection for his wife, or from fear of exciting the suspicions of the republicans, with whom he was still keeping on terms, rejected the idea of this marriage, which was to have been concluded through the agency of the Prince of the Peace.

In 1790 Lucien Bonaparte, who was then keeper of the military stores near Toulon, had married the daughter of an innkeeper, who bore him two daughters, and who died a few years later. The elder of these two girls was in after years recalled to France by the Emperor, who, when he saw his affairs going badly in Spain, wished to treat for peace with the Prince of the Asturias, and to make him marry this daughter of Lucien's. But the young girl, who was placed under her grandmother's care, too frankly imparted in her letters to her father the impression she received at her uncle's Court; she ridiculed the most important personages, and her letters, having been opened, so irritated the Emperor that he sent her back to Italy.

In 1803 Lucien, now a widower and entirely devoted to a life of pleasure, to which I might indeed give a harsher name, fell suddenly in love with Mme. Jouberthon, the wife of a stock-broker. Her husband was promptly sent to Saint Domingo, where he died, and then this beautiful and clever woman managed to make Lucien marry her, despite the op-

* June 6, 1801.—P. R.

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position of the First Consul. An open rupture took place between the two brothers on that occasion. Lucien left France in the spring of 1804, and established himself at Rome.

It is well known that since then he has devoted himself to the interests of the Pope, and has adroitly secured his protection; so much so that even now, although he was recalled to Paris at the period of the fatal enterprise of 1815, he was permitted to return, after the second restoration of the King, to the Roman States, and live quietly with those members of his family who had retired thither. Lucien was born in 1775.*

Louis Bonaparte.

Louis Bonaparte, born in 1778, is a man concerning whom opinions have differed widely. His assumption of a stricter morality than that of other members of his family, his odd opinions—based, however, on daring theories rather than on solid principles—have deceived the world, and made for him a reputation apart from that of his brothers. With much less talent than either Napoleon or Lucien, he has a touch of romance in his imagination, which he manages to combine with complete hardness of heart. Habitual ill health blighted his youth, and has added to the harsh melancholy of his disposition. I do not know whether, had he been left to himself, the ambition so natural to all his family would have been developed in him; but he has, at least, shown upon several occasions that he considered himself entitled to profit by the chances which circumstances have thrown in his way. He has been applauded for wishing to govern Holland in the interests of the country, in spite of his brother's projects, and his abdication, although it was due to a whim rather than to generous feeling, has certainly done him honor. It is, after all, the best action of his life.

Louis Bonaparte is essentially egotistical and suspicious. In the course of these Memoirs he will become better known.

* Lucien Bonaparte died at Viterbo, June 30, 1840.—P. R.

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Bonaparte said of him one day, "His feigned virtues give me almost as much trouble as Lucien's vices." He has retired to Rome since the downfall of his family.

Madame Josephine Bonaparte and her Family.

The Marquis de Beauharnais, father of the general who was the first husband of Mme. Bonaparte, having been employed in a military capacity at Martinique, became attached to an aunt of Mme. Bonaparte's, with whom he returned to France, and whom he married in his old age.

This aunt brought her niece, Josephine de la Pagerie, to France. She had her educated, and made use of her ascendancy over her aged husband to marry her niece, at the age of fifteen years, to young Beauharnais, her stepson. Although he married her against his inclination, there is no doubt that at one time he was much attached to his wife; for I have seen very loving letters written by him to her when he was in garrison, and she preserved them with great care. Of this marriage were born Eugène and Hortense. When the Revolution began, I think that Beauharnais's love for his wife had cooled. At the commencement of the Terror M. de Beauharnais was still commanding the French armies, and had no longer any relations with his wife.

I do not know under what circumstances she became acquainted with certain deputies of the Convention, but she had some influence with them; and, as she was kind-hearted and obliging, she used it to do as much good to as many people as possible. From that time her reputation for good conduct was very much damaged; but her kindness, her grace, and the sweetness of her manners could not be disputed. She served my father's interests more than once with Barrère and Tallien, and owed to this my mother's friendship. In 1793 chance placed her in a village on the outskirts of Paris, where, like her, we were passing the summer. Our near neighborhood led to some intimacy. I remember that Hortense, who was three or four years younger

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than I, used to visit me in my room, and, while amusing herself by examining my little trinkets, she would tell me that all her ambition for the future was to be the owner of a similar treasure. Unhappy woman! She has since been laden with gold and diamonds, and how has she not groaned under the crushing weight of the royal diadem!

In those evil days when every one was forced to seek a place of safety from the persecution by which all classes of society were beset, we lost sight of Mme. de Beauharnais. Her husband, being suspected by the Jacobins, had been thrown into prison in Paris, and condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal. She also was imprisoned, but escaped the guillotine, which preyed on all without distinction. Being a friend of the beautiful Mme. Tallien, she was introduced into the society of the Directory, and was especially favored by Barras. Mme. de Beauharnais had very little fortune, and her taste for dress and luxury rendered her dependent on those who could help her to indulge it. Without being precisely pretty, she possessed many personal charms. Her features were delicate, her expression was sweet; her mouth was very small, and concealed her bad teeth; her complexion was rather dark, but with the help of red and white skillfully applied she remedied that defect; her figure was perfect; her limbs were flexible and delicate; her movements were easy and elegant. La Fontaine's line could never have been more fitly applied than to her:

"Et la grâce, plus belle encore que la beauté."

She dressed with perfect taste, enhancing the beauty of what she wore; and, with these advantages and the constant care bestowed upon her attire, she contrived to avoid being eclipsed by the youth and beauty of many of the women by whom she was surrounded. To all this, as I have already said, she added extreme kindness of heart, a remarkably even temper, and great readiness to forget any wrong that had been done to her.

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She was not a person of remarkable intellect. A Creole, and frivolous, her education had been a good deal neglected; but she recognized her deficiencies, and never made blunders in conversation. She possessed true natural tact; she readily found pleasant things to say; her memory was good—a useful quality for those in high position. Unhappily, she was deficient in depth of feeling and elevation of mind. She preferred to charm her husband by her beauty, rather than the influence of certain virtues. She carried complaisance to excess for his sake, and kept her hold on him by concessions which, perhaps, contributed to increase the contempt with which he habitually regarded women. She might have taught him some useful lessons; but she feared him, and allowed him to dictate to her in everything. She was changeable, easy to move and easy to appease, incapable of prolonged emotion, of sustained attention, of serious reflection; and, although her greatness did not turn her head, neither did it educate her. The bent of her character led her to console the unhappy; but she could only dwell on the troubles of individuals—she did not think of the woes of France. The genius of Bonaparte overawed her: she only criticised him in what concerned herself personally; in everything else she respected what he called "the force of his destiny." He exerted an evil influence over her, for he inspired her with contempt for morality, and with a large share of his own characteristic suspicion; and he taught her the art of lying, which each of them practiced with skill and effect.

It is said that she was the prize of his command of the army of Italy; she has often assured me that at that time Bonaparte was really in love with her. She hesitated between him, General Hoche, and M. de Caulaincourt, who also loved her. Bonaparte prevailed. I know that my mother, then living in retirement in the country, was much surprised on learning that the widow of M. de Beauharnais was about to marry a man so little known as Bonaparte.

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When I questioned her as to what Bonaparte was like in his youth, she told me that he was then dreamy, silent, and awkward in the society of women, but passionate and fascinating, although rather an odd person in every way. She charged the campaign in Egypt with having changed his temper, and developed that petty despotism from which she afterward suffered so much.

I have seen letters from Napoleon to Mme. Bonaparte, written at the time of the first Italian campaign. She accompanied him to Italy, but he sometimes left her with the rearguard of the army, until a victory had secured the safety of the road. These epistles are very singular. The writing is almost illegible; they are ill spelt; the style is strange and confused. But there is in them such a tone of passionate feeling; the expressions are so animated, and at the same time so poetical; they breathe a love so different from mere "amours," that there is no woman who would not have prized such letters. They formed a striking contrast with the graceful, elegant, and measured style of those of M. de Beauharnais. How strange it must have been for a woman to find herself one of the moving powers of the triumphant march of an army, at a time when politics alone governed the actions of men! On the eve of one of his greatest battles, Bonaparte wrote: "I am far from you! It seems to me that I am surrounded by the blackest night; I need the lurid light of the thunderbolts which we are about to hurl upon our enemies to dispel the darkness into which your absence has thrown me. Josephine, you wept when I parted from you—you wept! At that thought all my being trembles. But calm yourself: Wurmser shall pay dearly for the tears I have seen you shed." And on the morrow Wurmser was beaten.

The enthusiasm with which General Bonaparte was received in beautiful Italy, the magnificence of the *fêtes*, the fame of his victories, the wealth which every officer might acquire there, the unbounded luxury in which she lived,

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accustomed Mme. Bonaparte from that time forth to all the pomp with which she was afterward surrounded; and she acknowledged that nothing in her life ever equaled the emotions of that time, when love came (or seemed to come) daily, to lay at her feet a new conquest over a people enraptured with their conqueror. It is, however, plain from these letters that Mme. Bonaparte, in the midst of this life of triumph, of victory, and of license, gave some cause for uneasiness to her victorious husband. His letters, sometimes sullen and sometimes menacing, reveal the torments of jealousy; and they abound in melancholy reflections, which betray his weariness of the fleeting delusions of life. It may have been that these misunderstandings, which outraged the first very keen feelings Bonaparte had ever experienced, had a bad effect upon him, and hardened him by degrees. Perhaps he would have been a better man if he had been more and better loved.

When, on his return from this brilliant campaign, the conquering general was obliged to exile himself to Egypt, to escape from the growing suspicion of the Directory, Mme. Bonaparte's position became precarious and difficult. Her husband entertained serious doubts of her, and these were prompted by Joseph and Lucien, who dreaded the powerful influence that she might exercise through her son, who had accompanied Bonaparte. Her extravagant tastes led her into reckless expense, and she was harassed by debts and duns.

Before leaving France, Bonaparte had directed her to purchase an estate; and as she wished to live in the neighborhood of Saint Germain, where her daughter was being educated, she selected Malmaison. There we met her again, when we were residing for some months at the château of one of our friends,* at a short distance from Malmaison.

* Mme. de Vergennes was very intimate with M. Chanorier, a wealthy and intelligent man living at Croissy, on the bank of the Seine, and who was one of the first to introduce the merino sheep into France. It was from Croissy that

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Mme. Bonaparte, who was naturally unreserved, and even indiscreet, had no sooner met my mother again than she talked to her very freely about her absent husband, about her brothers-in-law—in fact, about a host of people who were utter strangers to us. Bonaparte was supposed to be almost lost to France, and his wife was neglected. My mother took pity on her; we showed her some attention, which she never forgot. At that time I was seventeen years of age, and I had been married one year.

It was at Malmaison that Mme. Bonaparte showed us an immense quantity of pearls, diamonds, and cameos, which at that time constituted the contents of her jewel-case. Even at that time it might have figured in a story of the "Arabian Nights," and it was destined to receive immense accessions. Invaded and grateful Italy had contributed to these riches, and the Pope also, as a mark of his appreciation of the respect with which the conqueror treated him by denying himself the pleasure of planting his flag upon the walls of Rome. The reception-rooms at Malmaison were sumptuously decorated with pictures, statues, and mosaics, the spoils of Italy, and each of the generals who figured in the Italian campaign exhibited booty of the same kind.

Although she was surrounded with all these treasures, Mme. Bonaparte was often without money to meet her every-day expenses; and, to get out of this difficulty, she trafficked in her influence with the people in power at the time, and compromised herself by entering into imprudent relations. Dreadfully embarrassed, on worse terms than ever with her brothers-in-law, supplying too much reason for their accusations against her, and no longer counting on the return of her husband, she was strongly tempted to give her daughter in marriage to the son of Rewbell, a member of the Directory; but Mlle. de Beauharnais would not consent, and her

she and her daughters made a neighborly visit to Malmaison, and resumed with Mme. Bonaparte their former intimacy with Mme. de Beauharnais.

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opposition put an end to a project whose execution would doubtless have been highly displeasing to Bonaparte.

Presently a rumor of Bonaparte's arrival at Fréjus arose. He came back with his mind full of the evil reports that Lucien had repeated to him in his letters. His wife, on hearing of his disembarkation, set out to join him; she missed him, had to retrace her steps, and returned to the house in the Rue Chantereine some hours after his arrival there. She descended from her carriage in haste, followed by her son and daughter, and ran up the stairs leading to his room; but what was her surprise to find the door locked! She called to Bonaparte, and begged him to open it. He replied through the door that it should never again be opened for her. Then she wept, fell on her knees, implored him for her sake and that of her two children; but all was profound silence around her, and several hours of the night passed over her in this dreadful suspense. At last, however, moved by her sobs and her perseverance, Bonaparte opened the door at about four o'clock in the morning, and appeared, as Mme. Bonaparte herself told me, with a stern countenance, which, however, betrayed that he too had been weeping. He bitterly reproached her with her conduct, her forgetfulness of him, all the real or imaginary sins of which Lucien had accused her, and concluded by announcing an eternal separation. Then turning to Eugène de Beauharnais, who was at that time about twenty years old—"As for you," he said, "you shall not bear the burden of your mother's faults. You shall be always my son; I will keep you with me."

"No, no, General," replied Eugène; "I must share the ill fortune of my mother, and from this moment I say farewell to you."

These words shook Bonaparte's resolution. He opened his arms to Eugène, weeping; his wife and Hortense knelt at his feet and embraced his knees; and, soon after, all was forgiven. In the explanation that ensued, Mme. Bonaparte succeeded in clearing herself from the accusations of her

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brother-in-law; and Bonaparte, then burning to avenge her, sent for Lucien at seven o'clock in the morning, and had him, without any forewarning, ushered into the room where the husband and wife, entirely reconciled, occupied the same bed.

From that time Bonaparte desired his wife to break with Mme. Tallien and all the society of the Directory. The 18th Brumaire completely severed her connection with those individuals. She told me that on the eve of that important day she observed, with great surprise, that Bonaparte had loaded two pistols and placed them beside his bed. On her questioning him, he replied that a certain event might happen in the night which would render such a precaution necessary. Then, without another word, he lay down, and slept soundly until the next morning.

When he became Consul, the gentle and gracious qualities of his wife, which attracted many persons to his Court whom his natural rudeness would have otherwise kept away, were of great service to him. To Josephine he intrusted the measures to be taken for the return of the *émigrés*. Nearly all the "erasures" * passed through the hands of Mme. Bonaparte; she was the first link that united the French nobility to the Consular Government. We shall learn more of this in the course of these Memoirs.

Eugène de Beauharnais, born in 1780, passed through all the phases of a sometimes stormy and sometimes brilliant life, without ever forfeiting his title to general esteem. Prince Eugène, sometimes in camp with his father, sometimes in all the leisure and luxury of his mother's house, was, to speak correctly, educated nowhere. His natural instinct led toward what is right; the schooling of Bonaparte formed but did not pervert him; the lessons taught him by events—all these were his instructors. Mme. Bonaparte was incapable of giving sound advice; and therefore her son, who loved her sincerely, perceived very early in his career that it was useless to consult her.

* See Appendix.

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Prince Eugène did not lack personal attractions. His figure was graceful; he was skilled in all bodily exercises; and he inherited from his father that fine manner of the old French gentleman, in which, perhaps, M. de Beauharnais himself gave him his earliest lessons. To these advantages he added simplicity and kindheartedness; he was neither vain nor presumptuous; he was sincere without being indiscreet, and could be silent when silence was necessary. Prince Eugène had not much natural talent; his imagination was not vivid, and his feelings were not keen. He was always obedient to his stepfather; and, although he appreciated him exactly, and was not mistaken with regard to him, he never hesitated to observe the strictest fidelity to him, even when it was against his own interests. Never once was he surprised into showing any sign of discontent, either when the Emperor, while loading his own family with honors, seemed to forget him, or when his mother was repudiated. At the time of the divorce Eugène maintained a very dignified attitude.

Eugène, as colonel of a regiment, was beloved by his soldiers. In Italy he was held in high honor. The sovereigns of Europe esteemed him, and the world was well pleased that his fortunes have survived those of his family. He had the good fortune to marry a charming princess, who never ceased to love him, and whom he rendered happy. He possessed in perfection those qualities which make the happiness of home life—sweet temper, and that natural cheerfulness which rises above every ill, and was perhaps due to the fact that he was never profoundly moved by anything. When, however, that kind of indifference toward the interests of other people is also displayed in one's own personal troubles, it may fairly be called philosophy.

Hortense, Prince Eugène's younger sister (she was born in 1783), was, I think, the most unhappy person of our time, and the least formed by nature to be so. Cruelly slandered by the Bonapartes, who hated her, included in the accusa-

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tions which the public delighted to bring against all who belonged to that family, she was not strong enough to contend against such a combination of ills, and to defy the calumnies that blighted her life.*

Mme. Louis Bonaparte, like her mother and brother, was not remarkable for intellect; but, like them, she possessed tact and good feeling, and she was more high-minded and imaginative than they. Left to herself in her youth, she escaped the contagion of the dangerous example of evil. At Mme. Campan's select and elegant boarding-school she acquired accomplishments rather than education. While she was young, a brilliant complexion, beautiful hair, and a fine figure rendered her agreeable to look upon; but she lost her teeth early, and illness and sorrow altered her features. Her natural instincts were good; but, being absolutely ignorant of the world and the usages of society, and entirely given up to ideal notions drawn from a sphere which she had created for herself, she was unable to rule her life by those social laws which do not indeed preserve the virtue of women, but which procure them support when they are accused, without which it is impossible to pass through the

* There are few things in these Memoirs which will be read with greater surprise than the pages relating to Queen Hortense. My grandmother lived and died in the conviction that in speaking thus she was strictly adhering to the truth. The contrary opinion has, however, prevailed; and it has been confirmed by the conduct of her son, Napoleon III., who rendered marked honors to the Duke de Morny. Very likely that, as often happens, all was true according to the epoch—in youth, innocence, and sorrow; afterward, consolation. It is unnecessary to say that on this point I preserve the exact text of the Memoirs, as they were written by the hand of their author. I have only thought it right to suppress comments of an opposite nature on certain ladies of the Court. The reader will, perhaps, be surprised to find no mention in these portraits of the family of either Queen Caroline or Princess Pauline Bonaparte. I leave out certain matters in relation to them which have no bearing on the Emperor himself. My father particularly desired that the text of his mother's Memoirs should be scrupulously respected. It seemed to me, however, that on this point I might fairly depart from the rules of strict editing. Habits, tastes, customs become modified by time, and much that seemed natural to a clever woman in high life at that period would give scandal in our more punctilious day.

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world, and which the approbation of conscience can not replace. It is not sufficient to lead a good life in order to appear virtuous; women must also obey those rules which society has made. Mme. Louis, who was placed in circumstances of extreme difficulty, never had a guide; she understood her mother, and could not venture to place any confidence in her. As she held firmly to the principles, or rather to the sentiments, her imagination had created, she was at first very much surprised at the lapses from morality in which she detected the women by whom she was surrounded, and was still more surprised when she found that these faults were not always the result of love. Her marriage cast her on the mercy of the most tyrannical of husbands; she became the resigned and dejected victim of ceaseless and unremitting persecution, and sank under the weight of her sorrow. She yielded to it without daring to complain, and it was not until she was on the point of death that the truth became known. I knew Mme. Louis Bonaparte very intimately, and was acquainted with all the secrets of her domestic life. I have always believed her to be the purest, as she was the most unfortunate, of women.

Her only consolation was in her tender love for her brother; she rejoiced in his happiness, his success, his amiable temper. How many times have I heard her say, "I only live in Eugène's life!"

She declined to marry Rewbell's son, and this reasonable refusal was the result of one of the errors of her imagination. From her earliest youth she had persuaded herself that a woman, if she would be virtuous and happy, should marry no man unless she loved him passionately. Afterward, when her mother wished her to marry the Comte de Mun, now a peer of France, she again refused to obey her.

M. de Mun had emigrated; Mme. Bonaparte obtained permission for his return. He came back to a considerable fortune, and asked for the hand of Mlle. de Beauharnais in marriage. Bonaparte, then First Consul, had little liking

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for this union. Mme. Bonaparte would, however, have had her own way about it, only for the obstinate resistance of her daughter. Some one said before her that M. de Mun had been, while in Germany, in love with Mme. de Staël. That celebrated woman was in the imagination of the young girl a sort of monster, whom it was impossible to know without scandal and without taint. M. de Mun became odious to her, and thus he missed a great match and the terrible downfall that was to ensue. It was a strange accident of destiny, thus to have missed being a prince, perhaps a king, and then dethroned.

A little while after, Duroc, then one of the Consul's aides-de-camp, and in high favor with him, fell in love with Hortense. She was not insensible to his passion, and thought she had at length found that other half of her being which she sought for. Bonaparte was in favor of the marriage; but this time Mme. Bonaparte was inflexible. "My daughter," she said, "must marry a gentleman or a Bonaparte." Then Louis was proposed. He had no liking for Hortense, he detested the Beauharnais family, and despised his sister-in-law: but, as he was taciturn, he was supposed to be amiable; as he was severe in his judgments, he was supposed to be a good man. Mme. Louis has since told me that when she first heard of this arrangement she suffered terribly. Not only was she forbidden to think of the man she loved, but she was also to be given to another, whom she instinctively distrusted. However, as this marriage was in accordance with her mother's wishes, as it would cement the family ties, and might advance her brother's interests, she yielded herself a submissive victim; nay, she did even more. Her imagination was full of the duties imposed on her; she determined to make every sort of sacrifice to the wishes of a husband whom she had the misfortune not to love. Too sincere and too reserved to feign sentiments she did not feel, she was gentle, submissive, full of deference, and more anxious perhaps to please him than if she had loved him. The false and

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suspicious disposition of Louis Bonaparte led him to regard the gentle deference of his wife as affectation and coquetry. "She practices on me," he said, "to deceive me." He believed that her conduct was dictated by the counsels of her experienced mother; he repelled the efforts she made to please him, and treated her with rude contempt. Nor was this all. He actually divulged to Mme. Louis all the accusations which had been brought against her mother, and, after having gone as far in that direction as he could go, he signified his pleasure that confidential relations between his wife and her mother should cease. He added, "You are now a Bonaparte. Our interests should be yours; those of your own family no longer concern you." He accompanied this cruel notification with insulting threats, and a coarse expression of his disdainful opinion of women; he enumerated the precautions he meant to take in order, as he said, to escape the common fate of all husbands, and declared that he would not be the dupe either of her attempts to escape his vigilance or of the tricks of pretended docility by which she might hope to win him over.

The effect of such a declaration upon a young woman full of fancies may easily be conceived. She conducted herself, however, as an obedient wife, and for many years only her sadness and her failing health betrayed her sufferings. Her husband, who was hard and capricious, and, like all the Bonapartes, selfish—worn and embittered besides by a painful disease which he had contracted during the Egyptian campaign—set no limit to his exactions. As he was afraid of his brother, while at the same time he wanted to keep his wife away from Saint Cloud, he ordered her to say it was by her own wish that she seldom went thither, and forbade her to remain there a single night, no matter how much her mother might press her to do so. Mme. Louis became pregnant very soon after her marriage. The Bonapartes and Mme. Murat, who were displeased at this marriage, because, as Joseph's children were girls, they foresaw

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that a son of Louis, who would also be a grandson of Mme. Bonaparte, would be the object of natural interest, spread the outrageous report that this pregnancy was the result of an intimacy between the First Consul and his stepdaughter, with the connivance of Josephine herself. The public was quite ready to believe this scandalous falsehood, and Mme. Murat repeated it to Louis, who, whether he believed it or not, made it a pretext for every kind of conjugal tyranny. The narrative of his cruelty to his wife would lead me too far at present; I shall return to the subject hereafter. Her servants were employed as spies upon her; the most trifling notes addressed to or written by her were opened; every friendship was prohibited; Louis was jealous even of Eugène. Scenes of violence were frequent; nothing was spared her. Bonaparte was not slow to perceive this state of affairs, but he was grateful to Mme. Louis for her silence, which put him at his ease, and exempted him from the necessity of interference. He, who never esteemed women, always professed positive veneration for Hortense, and the manner in which he spoke of and acted toward her is a formal contradiction of the accusations which were brought against her. In her presence his language was always careful and decent. He often appealed to her to arbitrate between his wife and himself, and he took rebukes from her that he would not have listened to patiently from any one else. "Hortense," he said more than once, "forces me to believe in virtue."

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

(1802–1803.)

Family affairs—My first evening at Saint Cloud—General Moreau—M. de Rémusat is made Prefect, and I, Lady of the Palace—Habits of the First Consul and of Mme. Bonaparte—M. de Talleyrand—The family of the First Consul—Mlles. Georges and Duchesnois—Mme. Bonaparte's jealousy.

NOTWITHSTANDING the date of the year in which I undertake this narrative, I shall not seek to excuse the motives which led my husband to attach himself to the person of Bonaparte, but shall simply explain them. In political matters justifications are worth nothing. Certain persons, having returned to France only three years ago, or having taken no part in public affairs before that epoch, have pronounced a sort of anathema against those among our fellow citizens who for twenty years have not held completely aloof from passing events. If it be represented to them that nobody pretends to pronounce whether they were right or wrong to indulge in their long sleep, and that they are merely asked to remain equally neutral on a similar question, they reject such a proposition with all the strength of their present position of vantage; they deal out unsparing and most ungenerous blame, for there is now no risk in undertaking the duties on which they pride themselves. And yet, when a revolution is in progress, who can flatter himself that he has always adopted the right course? Who among us has not been influenced by circumstances? Who, indeed,

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can venture to throw the first stone, without fear lest it recoil upon himself? Citizens of the same country, all more or less hurt by the blows they have given and received, ought to spare each other—they are more closely bound together than they think; and when a Frenchman mercilessly runs down another Frenchman, let him take care—he is putting weapons to use against them both into the hands of the foreigner.

Not the least evil of troubled times is that bitter spirit of criticism which produces mistrust, and perhaps contempt, of what is called public opinion. The tumult of passion enables every one to defy it. Men live for the most part so much outside of themselves, that they have few opportunities of consulting their conscience. In peaceful times, and for common ordinary actions, the judgments of the world replace it well enough; but how is it possible to submit to them, when they are ready to deal death to those who would bow to them? It is safest, then, to rely on that conscience which one can never question with impunity. Neither my husband's conscience nor my own reproaches him or me. The entire loss of his fortune, the experience of facts, the march of events, a moderate and legitimate desire for easier circumstances, led M. de Rémusat to seek a place of some kind in 1802. To profit by the repose that Bonaparte had given to France, and to rely on the hopes he inspired, was, no doubt, to deceive ourselves, but we did so in common with all the rest of the world.

Unerring prevision is given to very few; and if, after his second marriage, Bonaparte had maintained peace, and had employed that portion of his army which he did not disband to line our frontiers, who is there that would have dared to doubt the duration of his power and the strength of his rights? At that time both his power and his rights seemed to have acquired the force of legitimacy. Bonaparte reigned over France with the consent of France. That fact only blind hatred or foolish pride can now attempt to deny.

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He reigned for our misfortune and for our glory: the alliance of those two words is, in the present state of society, more natural than it seems, at least when military glory is in question. When he became Consul, people breathed freely. At first he won public confidence; when, afterward, causes of disquiet arose, the country was already committed to him. At last he frightened all the minds who had believed in him, and led true citizens to desire his fall, even at the risk of loss to themselves. This is the history of M. de Rémusat and myself; there is nothing humiliating in it. We too were relieved and confident when the country had breathing space, and afterward we desired its deliverance before all things.

No one will ever know what I suffered during the later years of Bonaparte's tyranny. It would be impossible for me to describe the absolute sincerity with which I longed for the return of the King, who would, as I firmly believed, restore peace and liberty to us. I foresaw all my personal losses; and M. de Rémusat foresaw them even more clearly than I did. That which we desired would ruin the fortune of our children. But the loss of that fortune, which we could have preserved only by the sacrifice of our convictions, did not cost us a regret. The ills of France cried too loud then—shame to those who would not listen to them! We served Bonaparte, we even loved and admired him; and it costs me nothing to make this avowal. It seems to me it is never painful to avow a genuine feeling. I am not at all embarrassed because the opinions I held at one time are opposed to those which I held at another; I am not incapable of being mistaken. I know what I have felt, and I have always felt it sincerely; that is sufficient for God, for my son, for my friends, for myself.

My present task is, however, a difficult one, for I must go back in search of a number of impressions which were strong and vivid when I received them, but which now, like ruined buildings devastated by fire, have no longer any connection one with another.

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At the commencement of these Memoirs I shall pass as briefly as possible over all that is merely personal to ourselves, up to the time of our introduction to the Court of Bonaparte; afterward I shall perhaps revert to still earlier recollections. A woman can not be expected to relate the political life of Bonaparte. If he was so reserved with those who surrounded him that persons in the next room to him were often ignorant of events which they would indeed learn by going into Paris, but could only comprehend fully by transporting themselves out of France, how much more impossible would it have been for me, young as I was when I made my entry into Saint Cloud, and during the first years that I lived there, to do more than seize upon isolated facts at long intervals of time? I shall record what I saw, or thought I saw, and will do my best to make my narrative as accurate as it is sincere.

I was twenty-two years old when I became lady-in-waiting to Mme. Bonaparte. I was married at sixteen years of age, and had previously been perfectly happy in a quiet life, full of home affections. The convulsions of the Revolution, the execution of my father in 1794, the loss of our fortune, and my mother's love of retirement, kept me out of the gay world, of which I knew and desired to know nothing. I was suddenly taken from this peaceful solitude to act a part upon the stage of history; and, without having passed through the intermediate stage of society, I was much affected by so abrupt a transition, and my character has never lost the impression it then received. I dearly loved my husband and my mother, and in their society I had been accustomed to follow the impulses of my feelings. In the Bonaparte household I interested myself only in what moved me strongly. I never in my life could occupy myself with the trifles of what is called the great world.

My mother had brought me up most carefully; my education was finished under the superintendence of my husband, who was a highly cultivated man, and older than I by sixteen

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years. I was naturally grave, a tendency which in women is always allied to enthusiasm. Thus, during the early part of my residence with Mme. Bonaparte and her husband, I was full of the sentiments which I considered due to them. Their well-known characters, and what I have already related of their domestic life, rendered this a sure preparation for many mistakes, and certainly I did not fail to make them.

I have already mentioned our friendship with Mme. Bonaparte during the expedition to Egypt. After that we lost sight of her, until the time when my mother, having arranged a marriage for my sister with a relative of ours,* who had returned secretly, but was still included in the list of the proscribed, addressed herself to Mme. Bonaparte in order to obtain his "erasure."† The matter was readily arranged. Mme. Bonaparte, who was then endeavoring, with much tact and kindness, to win over persons of a certain class who still held aloof from her husband, begged that my mother and M. de Rémusat would visit her one evening, in order to return thanks to the First Consul. It was not possible to refuse, and accordingly, one evening, shortly after Bonaparte had taken up his abode there, we went to the Tuileries.‡ His wife told me afterward that on the first night of their sojourn in the palace, he said to her, laughing, "Come, little Creole, get into the bed of your masters."

We found Bonaparte in the great drawing-room on the ground floor; he was seated on a sofa. Beside him I saw General Moreau, with whom he appeared to be in close conversation. At that period they were still trying to get on

* M. Charles de Ganay, son of a sister of M. Charles Gravier de Vergennes, and first cousin of the author of these Memoirs. He was a deputy and colonel of the Royal Guard under the Restoration. I do not know what prevented his marriage with Mlle. Alix de Vergennes, who shortly after married General Nansouty. The friendship between the two branches of the family was not disturbed by this affair, and it is happily perpetuated.—P. R.

† See Appendix.

‡ It was on the 19th of February, 1800 (30th Pluviose, year 8), that the First Consul took possession of the Tuileries.—P. R.

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together. A very amiable speech of Bonaparte's, of a graceful kind unusual with him, was much talked of. He had had a superb pair of pistols made, with the names of all Moreau's battles engraved on the handles in gold letters. "You must excuse their not being more richly ornamented," said Bonaparte, presenting them to him; "the names of your victories took up all the space."

There were in the drawing-room ministers, generals, and ladies. Among the latter, almost all young and pretty, were Mme. Louis Bonaparte;* Mme. Murat, who was recently married, and who struck me as very charming; and Mme. Marat, who was paying her wedding visit, and was at that time perfectly beautiful. Mme. Bonaparte received her company with perfect grace; she was dressed tastefully in a revived antique style which was the fashion of the day. Artists had at that time a good deal of influence on the customs of society.

Bonaparte rose when we courtesied to him, and after a few vague words reseated himself, and took no more notice of the ladies who were in the room. I confess that, on this occasion, I was less occupied with him than with the luxury, the elegance, and the magnificence on which my eyes rested for the first time.

From that time forth we made occasional visits to the Tuileries; and after a while it was suggested to us, and we took to the idea, that M. de Rémusat might fill some post, which would restore us to the comfort of which the loss of our fortune had deprived us. M. de Rémusat, having been a magistrate before the Revolution, would have preferred occupation of a legal character. He would not grieve me by separating me from my mother and taking me away from Paris, and therefore he was disposed to ask for a place in the Council of State, and to avoid prefectures. But then we really knew nothing of the structure and composition of the

* Hortense de Beauharnais had married Louis Bonaparte on the 4th of January, 1802.

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Government. My mother had mentioned our position to Mme. Bonaparte, who had taken a liking to me, and was also pleased with my husband's manners, and it occurred to her that she might place us near herself. Just at this time my sister, who had not married the cousin whom I have mentioned, married M. de Nansouty, a general of brigade, the nephew of Mme. de Montesson, and a man very much esteemed in the army and in society. This marriage strengthened our connection with the Consular Government, and a month afterward Mme. Bonaparte told my mother that she hoped before long M. de Rémusat would be made a Prefect of the Palace. I will pass over in silence the sentiments with which this news was received in the family. For my own part, I was exceedingly frightened. M. de Rémusat was resigned rather than pleased; and, as he is a particularly conscientious man, he applied himself to all the minute details of his new occupation immediately after his nomination, which soon followed. Shortly afterward I received the following letter from General Duroc, Governor of the Palace:

"MADAME: The First Consul has nominated you to attend upon Mme. Bonaparte, in doing the honors of the palace. His personal knowledge of your character and of your principles satisfies him that you will acquit yourself of this duty with the politeness which distinguishes French ladies, and with dignity such as the Government requires. I am happy to have been made the medium of announcing to you this mark of his esteem and confidence.

"Receive, madame, my respectful homage."

Thus did we find ourselves installed at this singular Court. Although Bonaparte would have been angry if any one had seemed to doubt the sincerity of his utterances, which were at this period entirely republican, he introduced some novelty into his manner of life every day, which tended to give the place of his abode more and more resemblance to the

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palace of a sovereign. He liked display, provided it did not interfere with his own particular habits; therefore he laid the weight of ceremonial on those who surrounded him. He believed also that the French are attracted by the glitter of external pomp. He was very simple in his own attire, but he required his officers to wear magnificent uniforms. He had already established a marked distance between himself and the two other Consuls; and just as, although he used the preamble, "By order of the Consuls," etc., in the acts of government, his own signature only was placed at the end, so he held his court alone, either at the Tuileries or at Saint Cloud; he received the ambassadors with the ceremonial used by kings, and always appeared in public attended by a numerous guard, while he allowed his colleagues only two grenadiers before their carriages; and finally he began to give his wife rank in the state.

At first we found ourselves in a somewhat difficult position, which, nevertheless, had its advantages. Military glory and the rights it confers were all-in-all to the generals and aides-de-camp who surrounded Bonaparte. They seemed to think that every distinction belonged exclusively to them. The Consul, however, who liked conquest of all kinds, and whose design was to gain over to himself all classes of society, made his Court pleasant to persons belonging to other professions. Besides this, M. de Rémusat, who was a man of intellect, of remarkable learning, and superior to his colleagues in conversational powers, was soon distinguished by his master, who was quick at discovering qualities which might be useful to himself. Bonaparte was glad that persons in his service should know, for his purposes, things of which he was ignorant. He found that my husband knew all about certain customs which he wanted to reëstablish, and was a safe authority on matters of etiquette and the habits of good society. He briefly indicated his projects, was at once understood, and as promptly obeyed. This unusual manner of pleasing him at first gave some offense to the military men.

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They foresaw that they would no longer be the only persons in favor, and that they would be required to alter the rough manners which did well enough for camps and fields of battle; therefore our presence displeased them. For my own part, although I was so young, I had more ease of manner than their wives. Most of my companions were ignorant of the world, timid and silent, and they were either shy or frightened in the presence of the First Consul. As for me, I was, as I have already said, very quick and lively, easily moved by novelty, fond of intellectual pleasures, interested in observing so many persons, all unknown to me; and I found favor with my new sovereign, because, as I have said elsewhere, I took pleasure in listening to him. And then, Mme. Bonaparte liked me, because she herself had chosen me; she was pleased that she had been able to attach a person of good family to herself, and that through the medium of my mother, whom she respected highly. She trusted me, and I was attached to her, so that before long she confided all her secrets to me, and I received them with discretion. Although I might have been her daughter,* I was often able to give her good advice, because the habits of a secluded and strict life make one take a serious view of things. My husband and I were soon placed in so prominent a position that we had to secure forgiveness for it. We obtained that position almost entirely by preserving our simple ways, by keeping within the bounds of politeness, and by avoiding everything which might lead to the suspicion that we wanted to trade on the favor we were in.

M. de Rémusat lived in a simple and kindly fashion in the midst of this warlike Court. As for me, I was fortunate enough to hold my own without offense, and I put forward no pretension distasteful to other women. The greater

* The Empress Josephine was born at Martinique in 1763. She married M. de Beauharnais in 1779, and separated from him in 1783. After the death of her husband she was married (civilly) to General Bonaparte, on the 9th of March, 1796. She died on the 29th of May, 1814.—P. R.

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number of my companions were much handsomer than I—some of them were very beautiful; and they were all superbly dressed. My face, which had no beauty but that of youth, and the habitual simplicity of my attire, satisfied them that in several ways they were superior to me; and it soon seemed as if we had made a tacit compact that they should charm the eyes of the First Consul when we were in his presence, and that I should endeavor, as far as lay in my power, to interest his mind. As I have already said, to do that one had only to be a good listener.

Political ideas rarely enter into the head of a woman at twenty-two. I was at that time quite without any kind of party spirit. I never reasoned on the greater or less right which Bonaparte had to the power of which every one declared that he made a good use. M. de Rémusat, who believed in him, as did nearly the whole of France, was full of the hopes which at that time seemed to be well founded. All classes, outraged and disgusted by the horrors of the Revolution, and grateful to the Consular Government which preserved us from the Jacobite reaction, looked upon its coming into power as a new era for the country. The trials of liberty that had been made over and over again had inspired a very natural, though not very reasonable, aversion to it; for, in truth, liberty always disappeared when its name was used merely to vary successive species of tyranny. Generally speaking, nobody in France wanted anything except quiet, the right to free exercise of the intellect, the cultivation of private virtues, and the reparation by degrees of those losses of fortune which were common to all. When I remember all the dreams which I cherished at that time, the recollection makes me sick at heart. I regret those fancies, as one regrets the bright thoughts of the springtime of life—of that time when, to use a simile familiar to Bonaparte himself, *one looks at all things through a gilded veil which makes them bright and sparkling.* "*Little by little,*" said he, "*this veil thickens as we advance in life, until all is*

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nearly black." Alas! he himself soon stained with blood that gilded veil through which France had gladly contemplated him.

It was in the autumn of 1802 that I established myself for the first time at Saint Cloud, where the First Consul then was. There were four ladies, and we each passed a week in succession in attendance on Mme. Bonaparte. The service, as it was called, of the prefects of the palace, of the generals of the guard, and of the aides-de-camp, was conducted in the same way. Duroc, the Governor of the Palace, lived at Saint Cloud; he kept the household in perfect order; we dined with him. The First Consul took his meals alone with his wife. Twice a week he invited some members of the Government; once a month he gave a great dinner to a hundred guests at the Tuileries, in the Gallery of Diana; after these dinners he received every one who held an important post or rank, either military or civil, and also foreigners of note. During the winter of 1803 we were still at peace with England. A great number of English people came to Paris, and as we were not accustomed to seeing them, they excited great curiosity.

At these brilliant receptions there was a great display of luxury. Bonaparte liked women to dress well, and, either from policy or from taste, he encouraged his wife and sisters to do so. Mme. Bonaparte and Mmes. Bacciochi and Murat (Mme. Leclerc, afterward Princess Pauline, was at Saint Domingo in 1802) were always magnificently attired. Costumes were given to the different corps; the uniforms were rich; and this pomp, coming as it did after a period in which the affectation of squalor had been combined with that of extravagant *civisme*, seemed to be an additional guarantee against the return of that fatal *régime* which was still remembered with dread.

Bonaparte's costume at this period is worthy of record. On ordinary days he wore one of the uniforms of his guard; but he had decreed, for himself and his two colleagues, that

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on all occasions of grand ceremonial each should wear a red coat, made in winter in velvet, in summer of some other material, and embroidered in gold. The two Consuls, Cambacérès and Lebrun, elderly, powdered, and well set up, wore this gorgeous coat, with lace, ruffles, and a sword, after the old fashion of full dress; but Bonaparte, who detested all such adornments, got rid of them as much as possible. His hair was cut short, smoothed down, and generally ill arranged. With his crimson-and-gold coat he would wear a black cravat, a lace frill to his shirt, but no sleeve ruffles. Sometimes he wore a white vest embroidered in silver, but more frequently his uniform waistcoat, his uniform sword, breeches, silk stockings, and boots. This extraordinary costume and his small stature gave him the oddest possible appearance, which, however, no one ventured to ridicule. When he became Emperor, he wore a richly laced coat, with a short cloak and a plumed hat; and this costume became him very well. He also wore a magnificent collar of the Order of the Legion of Honor, in diamonds, on state occasions; but on ordinary occasions he wore only the silver cross.

On the eve of his coronation, the marshals he had newly created a few months before came to pay him a visit, all gorgeously arrayed. The splendor of their costume, in contrast with his simple uniform, made him smile. I was standing at a little distance from him, and as he saw that I smiled also, he said to me, in a low tone, "It is not every one who has the right to be plainly dressed." Presently the marshals of the army began disputing among themselves about the great question of precedence. Their pretensions were very well founded, and each enumerated his victories. Bonaparte, while listening to them, again glanced at me. "I think," said I, "you must have stamped your foot on France, and said, 'Let all the vanities arise from the soil.'" "That is true," he replied; "but it is fortunate that the French are to be ruled through their vanity."

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During the first months of my sojourn at Saint Cloud in the winter, and at Paris, my life was very pleasant. In the morning at eight o'clock Bonaparte left his wife's room and went to his study. When we were in Paris he again went down to her apartments to breakfast; at Saint Cloud he breakfasted alone, generally on the terrace. While at breakfast he received artists and actors, and talked to them freely and pleasantly. Afterward he devoted himself to public affairs until six o'clock. Mme. Bonaparte remained at home during the morning, receiving an immense number of visitors, chiefly women. Among these would be some whose husbands belonged to the Government, and some (these were called *de l'ancien régime*) who did not wish to have, or to appear to have, relations with the First Consul, but who solicited, through his wife, "erasures" or restitutions. Mme. Bonaparte received them all with perfect grace. She promised everything, and sent every one away well pleased. The petitions were put aside and lost sometimes, but then they brought fresh ones, and she seemed never tired of listening. *

* My father, born in 1797, was very young at this time. He had, however, a distinct recollection of a visit which he paid to the palace with his mother, and he writes in a note respecting it:

"On Sunday I was taken to the Tuileries, and allowed to look on the review of the troops in the Carrousel from the ladies'-maids' window. A large drawing by Isabey, which has been engraved, exactly reproduces all that was interesting in that spectacle. One day, after the parade, my mother came for me (I think she had accompanied Mme. Bonaparte into the court of the Tuileries), and took me up a staircase full of soldiers, at whom I stared hard. One of them, who was coming down, spoke to her; he wore an infantry uniform. 'Who is that?' I asked, when he had passed. He was Louis Bonaparte. Then I saw a young man going up stairs, in the well-known uniform of the Guides. His name I did not need to ask. Children in those days knew the insignia of every rank and corps in the army, and who did not know that Eugène de Beauharnais was Colonel of the Guides? At last we reached Mme. Bonaparte's drawing-room. At first there was no one there but herself, one or two ladies, and my father wearing his red coat embroidered in silver. I was probably kissed—perhaps they thought me grown; then no one noticed me any further. Soon an officer of the Consul's guard entered. He was short, thin, and carried himself badly, or at least carelessly. I was sufficiently drilled in etiquette to observe that he

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We dined at six in Paris; at Saint Cloud we went out to drive at that hour—the Consul alone in a *calèche* with his wife, we in other carriages. Bonaparte's brother and sisters and Eugène de Beauharnais might come to dine with him whenever they wished to do so. Sometimes Mme. Louis came; but she never slept at Saint Cloud. The jealousy of Louis Bonaparte, and his extreme suspicion, had already made her shy and melancholy. Once or twice a week the little Napoleon (who afterward died in Holland) was sent to Saint Cloud. Bonaparte seemed to love that child; he built hopes for the future upon him. Perhaps it was only on account of those hopes that he noticed him; for M. de Talleyrand has told me that, when the news of his nephew's death reached Berlin, Bonaparte, who was about to appear in public, was so little affected that M. de Talleyrand said, "You forget that a death has occurred in your family, and that you ought to look serious." "I do not amuse myself," replied Bonaparte, "by thinking of dead people."

It would be curious to compare this frank utterance with the fine speech of M. de Fontanes, who, having to deliver an address upon the depositing of the Prussian flags in great pomp at the Invalides, dwelt pathetically upon the majestic grief of a conqueror who turned from the splendor of his victories to shed tears over the death of a child.*

moved about a great deal, and made rather free. Among other things, I was surprised to see him sit on the arm of a chair. From thence he spoke, across a considerable distance, to my mother. We were in front of him, and I remarked his thin, almost wan face, with its brown and yellowish tints. We drew near him while he spoke. When I was within his reach, he noticed me; he took me by my two ears and pulled them rather roughly. He hurt me, and, had I not been in a palace, I should have cried. Then, turning to my father, 'Is he learning mathematics?' he said. Soon I was taken away. 'Who is that soldier?' I asked my mother. 'That soldier is the First Consul.'"

Such was my father's introduction to the life of courts. He saw the Emperor only once more, and under similar circumstances.—P. R.

* The following letters were written by the Emperor on the occasion of the death of this child, in May, 1807. He was at Finkestein, and he wrote to the Empress Josephine:

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After the Consul had dined, we were told we might go upstairs again. The conversation was prolonged, according as he was in a good or a bad humor. He would go away after a while, and in general we did not see him again. He returned to work, gave some particular audience or received one of the ministers, and retired early. Mme. Bonaparte played at cards in the evening. Between ten and eleven o'clock she would be told, "Madame, the First Consul has gone to his room," and then she would dismiss us for the night.

She and every one about her were very reserved respecting public affairs. Duroc, Maret (then Secretary of State), and the private secretaries were all impenetrable. Most of the soldiers, to avoid talking, as I believe, abstained from thinking; in that kind of life there was not much wear and tear of the mind.

On my arrival at Court, I was quite ignorant of the more or less dread that Bonaparte inspired in those who had known him for some time, and I was less embarrassed in his presence than the others; and I did not think myself bound to adopt the system of monosyllables religiously, and perhaps prudently, adopted by all the household. This, however, ex-

"I know how much the death of poor Napoleon grieves you; you can comprehend the pain I feel. I wish I were near you, that you might be moderate and reasonable in your grief. You have had the happiness never to lose a child; but that loss is one of the conditions and the penalties attached to our miserable human destiny. Let me hear that you have been reasonable, and that you are well, if you would not increase my trouble. Adieu, my love."

Some days later (the 20th of May) he wrote to the Queen of Holland: "My daughter, all that I hear from the Hague proves to me that you are not reasonble. However legitimate may be your grief, it ought to have limits. Do not ruin your health. Take some recreation, and learn that life is strewn with so many trials, and may be the cause of so many evils, that death is not the worst one of all." He wrote the same day to M. Fouché: "I have felt the loss of little Napoleon very much. I could have wished that his father and mother had received from nature as much courage as I have to endure all the evils of life. But they are young, and they have reflected less on the fragility of all things here below."—P. R.

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posed me to ridicule in a way of which I was unconscious at first, which afterward amused me, but which in the end I had to avoid.

One evening Bonaparte was praising the ability of the elder M. Portalis, who was then working at the Civil Code, and M. de Rémusat said M. Portalis had profited by the study of Montesquieu in particular, adding that he had read and learned Montesquieu as one learns the catechism. Bonaparte, turning to one of my companions, said to her, laughing, "I would bet something that you do not know what this Montesquieu is." "Pardon me," she replied, "everybody has read 'Le Temple de Guide.'" At this Bonaparte went off into a fit of laughter, and I could not help smiling. He looked at me and said, "And you, madame?" I replied simply that I was not acquainted with "Le Temple de Guide," but had read "Considérations sur les Romains," and that I thought neither the one nor the other work was the catechism to which M. de Rémusat alluded. "*Diable!*" said Bonaparte, "you are a *savante!*" This epithet disconcerted me, for I felt that it would stick. A minute after, Mme. Bonaparte began to talk of a tragedy (I do not know what it was) which was then being performed. On this the First Consul passed the living authors in review, and spoke of Ducis, whose style he did not admire. He deplored the mediocrity of our tragic poets, and said that, above everything in the world, he should like to recompense the author of a fine tragedy. I ventured to say that Ducis had spoilt the "Othello" of Shakespeare. This long English name coming from my lips produced a sensation among our silent and attentive audience in epaulettes. Bonaparte did not altogether like anything English being praised. We argued the point awhile. All I said was very commonplace; but I had named Shakespeare, I had held my own against the Consul, I had praised an English author. What audacity! what a prodigy of erudition! I was obliged to keep silence for several days after, or at least only to take part in idle

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talk, in order to efface the effect of my unlucky and easily gained reputation for cleverness.

When I left the palace and went back to my mother's house, I associated there with many amiable women and distinguished men, whose conversation was most interesting; and I smiled to myself at the difference between their society and that of Bonaparte's Court.

One good effect of our almost habitual silence was, that it kept us from gossip. The women had no chance of indulging in coquetry; the men were incessantly occupied in their duties; and Bonaparte, who did not yet venture to indulge all his fancies, and who felt that the appearance of regularity would be useful to him, lived in a way which deceived me as to his morality. He appeared to love his wife very much; she seemed to be all in all to him. Nevertheless, I discovered ere long that she had troubles of a nature which surprised me. She was of an exceedingly jealous disposition. It was a very great misfortune for her that she had no children by her second husband; he sometimes expressed his annoyance, and then she trembled for her future. The family of the First Consul, who were always bitter against the Beauharnais, made the most of this misfortune. From these causes quarrels arose. Sometimes I found Mme. Bonaparte in tears, and then she would complain bitterly of her brothers-in-law, of Mme. Murat, and of Murat, who kept up their own influence by exciting the Consul to passing fancies, and promoting his secret intrigues. I begged her to keep quiet. I could see that if Bonaparte loved his wife, it was because her habitual gentleness gave him repose, and that she would lose her power if she troubled or disturbed him. However, during my first years at Court, the slight differences which arose between them always ended in satisfactory explanations and in redoubled tenderness.

After 1802 I never saw General Moreau at Bonaparte's Court; they were already estranged. Moreau's mother-in-law and wife were schemers, and Bonaparte could not endure

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a spirit of intrigue in women. Moreover, on one occasion the mother of Mme. Moreau, being at Malmaison, had ventured to jest about the suspected scandalous intimacy between Bonaparte and his young sister Caroline, then newly married. The Consul had not forgiven these remarks, for which he had severely censured both the mother and the daughter. Moreau complained, and was sharply questioned about his own attitude. He lived in retirement, among people who kept him in a state of constant irritation; and Murat, who was the chief of an active secret police, spied out causes of offense which were wholly unimportant, and continually carried malicious reports to the Tuileries. This multiplication of the police was one of the evils of Bonaparte's government, and was the result of his suspicious disposition. The agents acted as spies upon each other, denounced each other, endeavored to make themselves necessary, and kept alive Bonaparte's habitual mistrust. After the affair of the infernal machine, of which M. de Talleyrand availed himself to procure the dismissal of Fouché, the police had been put into the hands of Regnier, the chief judge. Bonaparte thought that his suppressing the Ministry of Police, which was a revolutionary invention, would look like liberalism and moderation. He soon repented of this step, and replaced the regular ministry by a multitude of spies, whom he continued to employ even after he had reinstated Fouché. His Prefect of Police, Murat, Duroc, Savary (who then commanded the *gend'armerie d'élite*), Maret (who had also a secret police, at the head of which was M. de Sémonville), and I don't know how many others, did the work of the suppressed ministry.

Fouché, who possessed in perfection the art of making himself necessary, soon crept back secretly into the favor of the First Consul, and succeeded in getting himself made minister a second time. The badly conducted trial of General Moreau aided him in that attempt, as will be seen by what follows.

At this time Cambacérès and Lebrun, Second and Third

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Consuls, took very little part in the administration of the Government. The latter, who was an old man, gave Bonaparte no concern. The former, a distinguished magistrate, who was of great weight in all questions within the province of the Council of State, took part only in the discussion of certain laws. Bonaparte profited by his knowledge, and relied with good reason on the ridicule which his petty vanity excited to diminish his importance. Cambacérès, charmed with the distinctions conferred on him, paraded them with childish pleasure, which was humored and laughed at. His self-conceit on certain points frequently secured his safety.

At the time of which I speak, M. de Talleyrand had vast influence. Every great political question passed through his hands. Not only did he regulate foreign affairs at that period, and principally determine the new State constitutions to be given to Germany—a task which laid the foundations of his immense fortune—but he had long conferences with Bonaparte every day, and urged him to measures for the establishment of his power on the basis of reparation and reconstruction. At that time I am certain that measures for the restoration of monarchy were frequently discussed between them. M. de Talleyrand always remained unalterably convinced that monarchical government only was suitable to France; while, for his own part, it would have enabled him to resume all his former habits of life, and replaced him on familiar ground. Both the advantages and the abuses proper to courts would offer him chances of acquiring power and influence. I did not know M. de Talleyrand, and all I had heard of him had prejudiced me strongly against him. I was, however, struck by the elegance of his manners, which presented so strong a contrast to the rude bearing of the military men by whom I was surrounded. He preserved among them the indelible characteristics of a *grand seigneur*. He overawed by his disdainful silence, by his patronizing politeness, from which no one could escape. M. de Talleyrand, who was the most artificial of beings, contrived to

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make a sort of natural character for himself out of a number of habits deliberately adopted; he adhered to them under all circumstances, as though they had really constituted his true nature. His habitually light manner of treating the most momentous matters was almost always useful to himself, but it frequently injured the effect of his actions.

For several years I had no acquaintance with him—I distrusted him vaguely; but it amused me to hear him talk, and see him act with ease peculiar to himself, and which lent infinite grace to all those ways of his, which in any other man would be regarded as sheer affectation.

The winter of this year (1803) was very brilliant. Bonaparte desired that fêtes should be given, and he also occupied himself with the restoration of the theatres. He confided the carrying out of the latter design to his Prefects of the Palace. M. de Rémusat was intrusted with the charge of the Comédie Française; a number of pieces which had been prohibited by Republican policy were put upon the stage. By degrees all the former habits of social life were resumed. This was a clever way of enticing back those who had been familiar with that social life, and of reuniting the ties that bind civilized men together. This system was skillfully carried out. Hostile opinions became weaker daily. The Royalists, who had been baffled on the 18th Fructidor, continued to hope that Bonaparte, after having reëstablished order, would include the return of the house of Bourbon among his restorations. They deceived themselves on this point indeed, but at least they might thank him for the reestablishment of order; and they looked forward to a decisive blow, which, by disposing of his person and suddenly rendering vacant a place which henceforth no one but he could fill, would make it evident that only the legitimate sovereign could be his natural successor. This secret idea of a party which is generally confident in what it hopes, and always imprudent in what it attempts, led to renewed secret correspondences with our princes, to attempts by the *émigrés*,

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and to movements in La Vendée; and all these proceedings Bonaparte watched in silence.

On the other hand, those who were enamored of federal government observed with uneasiness that the consular authority tended toward a centralization which was by degrees reviving the idea of royalty. These malcontents were almost of the same mind as the few individuals who, notwithstanding the errors into which the cause of liberty had led some of its partisans, were forced by their consciences to acknowledge that the French Revolution was a movement of public utility, and who feared that Bonaparte might succeed in paralyzing its action. Now and then a few words were said on this subject, which, although very moderate in tone, showed that the Royalists were not the only antagonists the secret projects of Bonaparte would meet with. Then there were the ultra-Jacobins to be kept within bounds, and also the military, who, full of their pretensions, were astonished that any rights except their own should be recognized. The state of opinion among all these different parties was accurately reported to Bonaparte, who steered his way among them prudently. He went on steadily toward a goal, which at that time few people even guessed at. He kept attention fixed upon a portion of his policy which he enveloped in mystery. He could at will attract or divert attention, and alternately excite the approbation of the one or the other party—disturb or reassure them as he found it necessary; now exciting wonder, and then hope. He regarded the French as fickle children ready to be amused by a new plaything at the expense of their own dearest interests. His position as First Consul was advantageous to him, because, being so undefined, it excited less uneasiness among a certain class of people. At a later period the positive rank of Emperor deprived him of that advantage; then, after having let France into his secret, he had no other means left whereby to efface the impression from the country, but that fatal lure of military glory which he displayed before her. From

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this cause arose his never-ending wars, his interminable conquests; for he felt we must be occupied at all hazards. And now we can see that from this cause, too, arose the obligation imposed on him to push his destiny to its limits, and to refuse peace either at Dresden or even at Châtillon. For Bonaparte knew that he must infallibly be lost, from that day on which his compulsory quietude should give us time to reflect upon him and upon ourselves.

At the end of 1802, or the beginning of 1803, there appeared in the "Moniteur" a dialogue between a Frenchman, enthusiastic on the subject of the English constitution, and a so-called reasonable Englishman, who, after having shown that there is, strictly speaking, no constitution in England, but only institutions, all more or less adapted to the position of the country and to the character of its inhabitants, endeavors to prove that these institutions could not be adopted by the French without giving rise to many evils. By these and similar means, Bonaparte endeavored to control that desire for liberty which always springs up anew in the minds of the French people.

About the close of 1802 we heard at Paris of the death of General Leclerc, of yellow fever, at Saint Domingo. In the month of January his pretty young widow returned to France. She was then in bad health, and dressed in deep, somber mourning; but still I thought her the most charming person I had ever seen. Bonaparte strongly exhorted her to conduct herself better than she had done before she went out to Saint Domingo; and she promised everything, but soon broke her word.

The death of General Leclerc gave rise to a little difficulty, and the settling of this tended toward that revival of former customs which was preparing the way for monarchy. Bonaparte and Mme. Bonaparte put on mourning, and we received orders to do likewise. This was significant enough; but it was not all. The ambassadors were to pay a visit at the Tuileries, to condole with the Consul and his wife on

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their loss, and it was represented to them that politeness required them to wear mourning on the occasion. They met to deliberate, and, as there was not time for them to obtain instructions from their several courts, they resolved to accept the intimation they had received, thus following the custom usual in such cases. Since September, 1802, an ambassador from England, Lord Whitworth, had replaced the *chargé d'affaires*. There was hope of a lasting peace; intercourse between England and France increased daily; but, notwithstanding this, persons who were a little better informed than the crown foresaw causes of dissension between the two Governments. There had been a discussion in the English Parliament about the part which the French Government had taken in the matter of the new Swiss constitution, and the "Moniteur," which was entirely official, published articles complaining of certain measures which were taken in London against Frenchmen. Appearances were, however, extremely favorable; all Paris, and especially the Tuileries, seemed to be given up to *fêtes* and pleasures. Domestic life at the château was all peace, when suddenly the First Consul's taking a fancy to a young and beautiful actress, of the Théâtre Français, threw Mme. Bonaparte into great distress, and gave rise to bitter quarrels.

Two remarkable actresses (Mlles. Duchesnois and Georges) had made their *début* in tragedy almost at the same time. The one was very plain, but her genius speedily gained popularity; the other was not so talented, but was extremely beautiful.* The Parisian public sided warmly with one or

* The following is my father's recollection of the talents and the rivalry of these two celebrated actresses: "The *liaison* of the Emperor with Mlle. Georges was much talked about. I myself remember when a controversy raged in society respecting the merits of the two *tragédiennes*. After each representation given by the one or the other, there were very animated disputes. Connoisseurs and the public in general preferred Mlle. Duchesnois. She had not much talent, however, and acted without intelligence; but she had passion, tenderness, and a touching voice, which moved her audience to tears. It was, I believe, for her that the phrase, 'to have tears in the voice,' was invented. My mother and

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the other, but in general the success of talent was greater than that of beauty. Bonaparte, on the contrary, was charmed with the latter; and Mme. Bonaparte soon learned, through the spying of her servants, that Mlle. Georges had on several occasions been introduced into a little back room in the château. This discovery caused her extreme distress; she told me of it with great emotion, and shed more tears than I thought such a temporary affair called for. I represented to her that gentleness and patience were the only remedies for a grief which time would certainly cure; and it was during the conversations we had on this subject that she gave me a notion of her husband which I would not otherwise have formed. According to her account, he had no moral principles whatever, and only concealed his vicious inclinations at that time because he feared they might harm him; but, when he could give himself up to them without any risk, he would abandon himself to the most shameful passions. Had he not seduced his own sisters one after the other? Did he not hold that his position entitled him to gratify all his inclinations? And, besides, his brothers were practicing on his weaknesses to induce him to relinquish all relations with his wife. As the result of their schemes she foresaw the much-dreaded divorce, which had already been mooted. "It is a great misfortune for me," she added, "that I have not borne a son to Bonaparte. That gives their hatred

my aunt (Mme. de Nansouty) were in favor of Mlle. Duchesnois, even to the point of disputing with my father himself, who, in his official capacity, was bound to be impartial. These discussions on dramatic art, enlivened by the facility which my father's functions gave us for attending the theatres, inspired me with a taste for literature and conversation quite beyond my age. When very young, I was taken to the theatre, and I saw both these Melpomenes. It was said the one was so good as to be beautiful, and the other was so beautiful as to be good. The latter, who was then very young, trusting to her charms, was indolent, and the want of flexibility in her voice and a kind of drawl in her pronunciation interfered with her elocution. I think, however, in reality she was more clever than her rival, but that, by using her talent in so many different ways, she at the same time developed and depreciated it; and she deserved at least a part of the reputation that she acquired in her old age."

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a weapon which they can always use against me." "But, madame," I said, "it appears to me that your daughter's child almost repairs that misfortune; the First Consul loves him, and will, perhaps, in the end adopt him." "Alas!" replied she, "that is the object of my dearest wishes; but the jealous and sullen disposition of Louis Bonaparte leads him to oppose it. His family have maliciously repeated to him the insulting rumors concerning my daughter's conduct and the paternity of her son. Slander has declared the child to be Bonaparte's, and that is sufficient to make Louis refuse his consent to the adoption. You see how he keeps away from us, and now my daughter is obliged to be on her guard in everything. Moreover, independently of the good reasons I have for not enduring Bonaparte's infidelities, they always mean that I shall have a thousand other annoyances to submit to."

This was quite true. I observed that from the moment the First Consul paid attention to another woman—whether it was that his despotic temper led him to expect that his wife should approve this indication of his absolute independence in all things, or whether nature had bestowed upon him so limited a faculty of loving that it was all absorbed by the person preferred at the time, and that he had not a particle of feeling left to bestow upon another—he became harsh, violent, and pitiless to his wife. Whenever he had a mistress, he let her know it, and showed a sort of savage surprise that she did not approve of his indulging in pleasures which, as he would demonstrate, so to speak, mathematically, were both allowable and necessary for him. "I am not an ordinary man," he would say, "and the laws of morals and of custom were never made for me." Such speeches as these aroused the anger of Mme. Bonaparte, and she replied to them by tears and complaints, which her husband resented with the utmost violence. After a while his new fancy would vanish suddenly, and his tenderness for his wife revive. Then he was moved by her grief, and would lavish

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caresses upon her as unmeasured as his wrath had been; and, as she was very placable and gentle, she was easily appeased.

While the storm lasted, however, my position was rendered embarrassing by the strange confidences of which I was the recipient, and at times by proceedings in which I was obliged to take part. I remember one occurrence in particular, during the winter of 1803, at which, and the absurd panic into which it threw me, I have often laughed since.

Bonaparte was in the habit of occupying the same room with his wife; she had cleverly persuaded him that doing so tended to insure his personal safety. "I told him," she said, "that as I was a very light sleeper, if any nocturnal attempt against him was made, I should be there to call for help in a moment." In the evening she never retired until Bonaparte had gone to bed. But when Mlle. Georges was in the ascendant, as she used to visit the château very late, he did not on those occasions go to his wife's room until an advanced hour of the night. One evening Mme. Bonaparte, who was more than usually jealous and suspicious, kept me with her, and eagerly talked of her troubles. It was one o'clock in the morning; we were alone in her boudoir, and profound silence reigned in the Tuileries. All at once she rose. "I can not bear it any longer," she said. "Mlle. Georges is certainly with him; I will surprise them." I was alarmed by this sudden resolution, and said all I could to dissuade her from acting on it, but in vain. "Follow me," she said; "let us go up together." Then I represented to her that such an act, very improper even on her part, would be intolerable on mine; and that, in case of her making the discovery which she expected, I should certainly be one too many at the scene which must ensue. She would listen to nothing; she reproached me with abandoning her in her distress, and she begged me so earnestly to accompany her, that, notwithstanding my repugnance, I yielded, saying

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to myself that our expedition would end in nothing, as no doubt precautions had been taken to prevent a surprise.

Silently we ascended the back staircase leading to Bonaparte's room; Mme. Bonaparte, who was much excited, going first, while I followed slowly, feeling very much ashamed of the part I was being made to play. On our way we heard a slight noise. Mme. Bonaparte turned to me and said, "Perhaps that is Rustan, Bonaparte's Mameluke, who keeps the door. The wretch is quite capable of killing us both." On hearing this, I was seized with such terror that I could not listen further, and, forgetting that I was leaving Mme. Bonaparte in utter darkness, I ran back as quickly as I could to the boudoir, candle in hand. She followed me a few minutes after, astonished at my sudden flight. When she saw my terrified face, she began to laugh, which set me off laughing also, and we renounced our enterprise. I left her, telling her I thought the fright she had given me was a very good thing for her, and that I was very glad I had yielded to it.

Mme. Bonaparte's jealousy affected her sweet temper so much that it could not long be a secret to anybody. I was in the embarrassing position of a confidant without influence over the person who confided in me, and I could not but appear to be mixed up in the quarrels which I witnessed. Bonaparte thought that one woman must enter eagerly into the feelings of another, and he showed some annoyance at my being made aware of the facts of his private life.

Meantime, the ugly actress grew in favor with the public of Paris, and the handsome one was frequently received with hisses. M. de Rémusat endeavored to divide patronage equally between the two; but whatever he did for the one or for the other was received with equal dissatisfaction, either by the First Consul or by the public.

These petty affairs gave us a good deal of annoyance. Bonaparte, without confiding the secret of his interest in the fair actress to M. de Rémusat, complained to my husband,

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saying that he would not object to my being his wife's confidant, provided I would only give her good advice. My husband represented me as a sensible person, brought up with a great regard for propriety, and who would be most unlikely to encourage Mme. Bonaparte's jealous fancies. The First Consul, who was still well disposed toward us, accepted this view of my conduct; but thence arose another annoyance. He called upon me to interfere in his conjugal quarrels, and wanted to avail himself of what he called my good sense against the foolish jealousy of which he was wearied. As I never could conceal my real sentiments, I answered quite sincerely, when he told me how weary he was of all these scenes, that I pitied Mme. Bonaparte very much, whether she suffered with or without cause, and that he, above all persons, ought to excuse her; but, at the same time, I admitted that I thought it undignified on her part to endeavor to prove the infidelity which she suspected by employing her servants as spies on her husband. The First Consul did not fail to tell his wife that I blamed her in this respect, and then I was involved in endless explanations between the husband and the wife, into which I imported all the ardor natural to my age, and also the devotion and attachment which I felt for both of them. We went through a constant succession of scenes, whose details have now faded from my memory, and in which Bonaparte would be at one time imperious, harsh, excessively suspicious, and at another suddenly moved, tender, almost gentle, atoning with a good grace for the faults he acknowledged but did not renounce.

I remember one day, in order to avoid an awkward *tête-à-tête* with Mme. Bonaparte, he made me remain to dinner. His wife was just then very angry, because he had declared that henceforth he would have a separate apartment, and he insisted that I should give my opinion on this point. I was quite unprepared to answer him, and I knew that Mme. Bonaparte would not readily forgive me if I did not decide in her favor. I tried to evade a reply; but Bonaparte, who

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enjoyed my embarrassment, insisted. I could find no other way out of the difficulty than by saying that I thought anything which might make people think the First Consul was altering his manner of living would give rise to injurious reports, and that the least change in the arrangements of the château would inevitably be talked about. Bonaparte laughed, and, pinching my ear, said, "Ah! you are a woman, and you all back each other."

Nevertheless, he carried out his resolution, and from that time forth occupied a separate apartment. His manner toward his wife, however, became more affectionate after this breeze, and she, on her side, was less suspicious of him. She adopted the advice which I constantly urged upon her, to treat such unworthy rivalry with disdain. "It would be quite time enough to fret," I said, "if the Consul chose one of the women in your own society; that would be a real grief, and for me a serious annoyance." Two years afterward my prediction was only too fully realized, especially as regarded myself.

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CHAPTER II.

(1803.)

A Return to the Customs of the Monarchy—M. de Fontanes—Mme. d'Houdetot—Rumors of War—Meeting of the Corps Législatif—Departure of the English Ambassador—M. Maret—Marshal Berthier—Journey of the First Consul to Belgium—A Carriage Accident—The Amiens Fêtes.

With the exception of this slight disturbance, the winter passed quietly. The progress of the restoration of order was marked by several new institutions. The lyceums were organized; the magistrates again wore official robes, and were also invested with some importance. A collection of French paintings was placed at the Louvre, and called "the Museum," and M. Denon was appointed superintendent. Pensions and rewards were conferred on men of letters, and M. de Fontanes was frequently consulted on these points. Bonaparte liked to talk with him, and their conversations were in general very entertaining. The First Consul amused himself by attacking the pure and classical taste of M. de Fontanes, who defended our French *chefs-d'œuvre* with warmth, and thus he gained a reputation for courage among those present. For there were already persons at that Court who took so readily to the *rôle* of the courtier, that they looked upon any one who ventured to admire "Mérope" or "Mithridates," after the master had declared that he cared for neither of those works, as quite a heroic being.

Bonaparte appeared to derive great amusement from these literary controversies. At one time he even thought of inviting certain men of letters to come twice a week to Mme.

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Bonaparte's receptions, so that he might enjoy their conversation. M. de Rémusat, who was acquainted with a number of distinguished men in Paris, was directed to invite them to the château. Accordingly, one evening, several academicians and well-known literary men were invited. Bonaparte was in a good humor that night; he talked very well, and allowed others to talk; he was agreeable and animated. I was charmed to see him make himself so agreeable. I was very anxious that he should make a favorable impression on persons who had not previously known him, and thus defeat certain prejudices which prevailed against him. When he chose, he could exhibit keen judgment, as he did, for instance, in appraising the worth of the old Abbé Morellet's intellect.* Morellet was a straightforward, positive man, who proceeded in argument from fact to fact and would never admit the power of the imagination on the progress of human ideas. Bonaparte delighted in upsetting this system. Allowing his imagination to take any flight it wished—and in the Abbé's presence it carried him far—he broached all kinds of subjects, gave full flight to his ideas, was highly amused at the bewilderment of the Abbé, and was really very entertaining.

The next day he spoke with pleasure of the previous evening, and said he would like to have many such. A similar reception was therefore fixed for a few days later. Somebody (I forget who) began to talk with much animation about liberty of thought and speech, and the advantages which they secure to nations. This led to a discussion considerably less free than on the former occasion, and the Consul maintained a silence when seemed to paralyze the company. On the third evening he came in late, was absent and gloomy, and spoke only a few unconnected sentences. Every one was silent and constrained; and the next day the First Consul told us that he saw there was nothing to be

* The Abbé Morellet, a friend of Mme. d'Houdetot and Mme. de Vergennes, was a well-known personage at the end of the eighteenth century, and was called by Voltaire the Abbé Mord-les. He died January 12, 1819.—P. R.

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made of these men of letters, nothing to be gained by admitting them to intimacy, and he did not wish they should be invited again. He could not bear any restraint, and being obliged to appear affable and in a good humor on a certain day and at a certain hour was a yoke which he hastened to shake off.

During that winter two distinguished academicians, MM. de la Harpe and de Saint-Lambert, died. I regretted the latter very much, because I was exceedingly attached to Mme. d'Houdetot, whose intimate friend he had been for forty years, and at whose house he died. This delightful old lady received all the best and most agreeable society of Paris. I was a constant visitor at her house; there I found the revival of a day which then seemed lost beyond recall—I mean that in which people conversed in an agreeable and instructive manner. Mme. d'Houdetot, whose age and disposition alike kept her aloof from all political parties, enjoyed the repose that the country was enjoying, and profited by it to collect all that remained of Parisian good society at her house. They came willingly to tend and to amuse her old age. To go to her house was a relief from the restraint under which I lived at the Tuileries, partly from the example of others and partly from the experience which I was beginning to acquire.

About this time a rumor rose that war with England was likely to break out again. Private letters revealing certain enterprises set on foot in La Vendée were published. In these letters the English Government was accused of aiding the Vendeans, and George Cadoudal was named in them as the agent between the English Government and the Chouans. M. André was also mentioned; it was said he had got into France secretly, after already having endeavored, before the 18th Fructidor, to assist the Royalist cause. While this rumor was spreading, the Legislative Assembly was called together. The report of the state of the Republic which was laid before it was remarkable, and gave rise to much comment. It

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included peace with foreign powers; the *conclusum* given at Ratisbon upon the new partition of Germany, and recognized by all the sovereigns; the constitution accepted by the Swiss; the Concordat; the regulation of public education; the formation of the Institute;* the improved administration of justice; the amelioration of the finances; the Civil Code, of which a portion was submitted to the Assembly; various public works commenced both on our frontiers and in France; plans for Antwerp, for Mont Cenis, the banks of the Rhine, and the canal de l'Ourcq; the acquisition of the island of Elba; the possession of Saint Domingo; several proposals for laws, upon indirect taxation, on the formation of chambers of commerce, on the exercise of the profession of medicine, and on manufactures. All this formed a satisfactory statement, and one honorable to the Government. At the end of the report, however, a few words were slipped in with reference to the possibility of a rupture with England, and the necessity for increasing the army. Neither the Legislative Assembly nor the Tribunate offered any opposition whatever, and approbation which at that time was really deserved was bestowed upon so fair a beginning to many great undertakings.

In March, bitter complaints appeared in our newspapers of certain pamphlets against Bonaparte which were circulated in England. This sensitiveness to strictures by the English free press was only a pretext; the occupation of Malta and our intervention in the Government of Switzerland were the true causes of the rupture. On the 8th of March, 1803, a message from the King of England to the Parliament declared that important differences between the two Governments had arisen, and complained of the warlike preparations which were being made in the ports of Holland. Immediately afterward the scene took place in which Bonaparte

* It would be more correct to say that the First Consul reorganized the Institute, by suppressing the class of moral and political sciences on January 23, 1803. This class was not reëstablished till after 1830.—P. R.

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either feigned or allowed himself to exhibit violent anger in the presence of all the ambassadors. A little later he left Paris for Saint Cloud.

Notwithstanding his absorption in public affairs, he took care to direct one of his Prefects of the Palace to write a letter of congratulation and compliment to the celebrated musician Paisiello on the opera of "Proserpine," which had just been given in Paris. The First Consul was exceedingly anxious to attract the celebrated people of all countries to France, and he paid them liberally.

Shortly afterward the rupture between France and England took place, and the English ambassador—before whose house a great crowd had been in the habit of assembling daily, in order to judge of the state of affairs, according to the preparations for departure which they could or could not perceive in the courtyard—left Paris abruptly. M. de Talleyrand communicated to the Senate a statement of the reasons that rendered war inevitable. The Senate replied that they could only applaud the combined moderation and firmness of the First Consul, and sent a deputation to Saint Cloud to express their gratitude and their devotion. M. de Vaublanc, when speaking in the Legislative Assembly, exclaimed enthusiastically, "What chief of a nation has ever shown a greater love of peace?" If it were possible to separate the history of the negotiations of the First Consul from that of his exploits, it would read like the life of a magistrate whose sole endeavor had been the establishment of peace. The Tribunate expressed a desire that energetic measures should be taken; and, after these various acts of admiration and obedience, the session of the Legislative Assembly came to a close.

Then appeared certain violent notes against the English Government, which soon became numerous, and dealt in detail with the attacks of the free daily press in London. Bonaparte dictated the substance of these notes, and M. Maret drew them up. Thus the sovereign of a great empire entered, so to speak, into a war of words with journalists,

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and lowered his own dignity by allowing it to be seen that he was stung by the criticisms of ephemeral newspapers, whose comments it would have been far wiser to ignore. It was easy for the English journalists to find out how hard their remarks hit the First Consul, and a little later the Emperor of France, and they accordingly redoubled their attacks. How many times, when we saw him gloomy and out of temper, did Mme. Bonaparte tell us it was because he had read some article against himself in the "Courier" or the "Sun"! He tried to wage a pen-and-ink war with the English press; he subsidized certain journals in London, expended a great deal of money, and deceived no one either in France or in England.

I have said that he often dictated notes on this subject for the "Moniteur." Bonaparte dictated with great ease. He never wrote anything with his own hand. His handwriting was bad, and as illegible by himself as by others; his spelling was very defective. He utterly lacked patience to do anything whatever with his own hands. The extreme activity of his mind and the habitual prompt obedience rendered to him prevented him from practicing an occupation in which the mind must necessarily wait for the action of the body. Those who wrote from his dictation—first M. Bourrienne, then M. Maret, and Menneval, his private secretary—had made a sort of shorthand for themselves, in order that their pens might travel as fast as his thoughts. He dictated while walking to and fro in his cabinet. When he grew angry, he would use violent imprecations, which were suppressed in writing, and which had at least the advantage of giving the writer time to come up with him. He never repeated anything that he once said, even if it had not been heard; and this was very hard on the poor secretary, for he remembered accurately what he had said and detected every omission. One day he read a tragedy in manuscript, and it interested him sufficiently to inspire him with a fancy to make some alterations in it. "Take a pen and paper," said

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he to M. de Rémusat, "and write for me." Hardly giving my husband time to seat himself at a table, he began to dictate so quickly that M. de Rémusat, although accustomed to write with great rapidity, was bathed in perspiration while trying to follow him. Bonaparte perceived his difficulty, and would stop now and then to say, "Come, try to understand me, for I will not repeat what I say." He always derived amusement from causing any one uneasiness and distress. His great general principle, which he applied to everything, both small and great, was that there could be no zeal where there was no disquiet. Fortunately he forgot to ask for the sheet of observations he had dictated. M. de Rémusat and I have often tried to read it since, but we have never been able to make out a word of it.

M. Maret, the Secretary of State, was a man of very ordinary intellect; indeed, Bonaparte did not dislike mediocrity, because he said he had enough brains to give those about him what they wanted in that way. M. Maret rose to high favor in consequence of his great facility in writing from the First Consul's dictation. He accustomed himself to follow and seize upon the first indication of Bonaparte's idea so faithfully that he could report it just as it came from the speaker's brain without making an observation. His favor with his master was perhaps still more largely due to the fact that he felt or feigned boundless devotion to him, and it was displayed by such enthusiastic admiration that Bonaparte could not help being flattered. So far did M. Maret carry the art of skillful adulation, that it was positively asserted that when he traveled with the Emperor he took the trouble to leave with his wife drafts of letters, which she copied carefully, complaining that her husband was so exclusively devoted to his master that she could not help feeling jealous. As all the letters were delivered at the Emperor's own quarters while he was traveling, and as he frequently amused himself by opening them, these clever complainings produced exactly the intended effect.

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When M. Maret* was Minister of Foreign Affairs, he took care not to follow the example of M. de Talleyrand, who used to say that it was, above all, Bonaparte himself whom it was necessary for that minister to manage. Maret, on the contrary, fostered all Bonaparte's passions, and was surprised that foreign sovereigns should dare to be angry when he insulted them, or should offer any resistance to their own ruin. He thus advanced his personal fortune at the expense of Europe, whose just interests an honest and able minister would have endeavored to protect. A courier was always in readiness, by whom he might dispatch to any one of the sovereigns the first angry words that escaped from Bonaparte, when he heard news which displeased him. His weak complaisance was sometimes injurious to his master. It caused more than one rupture which was regretted when the first outbreak of violence had passed, and it probably contributed to the fall of Bonaparte; for, in the last year of his reign, while he lingered at Dresden uncertain what to do, Maret delayed for eight days the retreat it was so important to make, because he had not the courage to inform the Emperor of the defection of Bavaria, a piece of intelligence it was most necessary he should learn.† An

* Afterward Duc de Bassano.

† The duties of the most conscientious editor do not bind him to explain, to justify, or, still less, to contradict the assertions or the suppositions of the author whose recollections he lays before the public. It is evident that a great many of the views expressed here are personal, or that they represent public opinion at that period of our history. While taking the responsibility of what he prints, the editor does not profess entire agreement with all the opinions of the author; and it is not necessary to bring forward an opinion in opposition to an impression, or a new document or a recent history in contrast with a contemporaneous impression of the facts, on every occasion of divergence. For instance, M. Maret doubtless merits reproach on more than one head, but the accusation that he was so base as not to inform the Emperor in time of the defection of Bavaria, in 1813, is probably one of those imputations which are due to the contempt with which M. de Talleyrand treated his pitiful, insignificant successor. He is known to have said, "I never knew but one man so stupid as the Duc de Bassano; he was M. Maret." It is probable that Maret, on his arrival at Leipsic in October, 1813, was made aware of the treaty of Bavaria

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anecdote of M. de Talleyrand may be related here, as a sample of the skill with which that astute minister managed

with the Coalition, but that he did not attach any great importance to it, or did not dare speak of it to a master who was becoming day by day less capable of bearing the truth, and of facing things which displeased him. The Duc de Bassano was, of all the ministers, the least fit to cope with this fatal tendency. There was in his nature a mixture of sincere servility and blind admiration, which made him a courtier rather than a minister. The following is my father's opinion of Bassano: "He was neither an utterly unintelligent nor a bad man, but he was one of those people whose mediocrity, alike in good or in evil, may be as pernicious as stupidity or villainy. He had but little intellect; his self-sufficiency and haughtiness as an improvised nobleman and a *parvenu* statesman were absolutely absurd. His heavy frivolity, his *bourgeois* dignity, and his vulgar affectation obscured what there really was in him. He had a great capacity for work, much facility of expression, a quick and tolerably just perception of the superficial and material side of affairs, an accurate memory for details, a faculty for attending to several things at once, and a talent for identifying himself with the idea or even the sentiment of what was dictated to him. The latter quality made him a useful, or rather a convenient instrument, and as a minister of the second or third rank he would have done well. He had no leaning toward wrong or injustice. Violence directed against individuals was not to his liking, and it is said that he sometimes averted it. He was, moreover, sincerely attached to the Emperor, and, to my knowledge, he never endeavored to elude by any meanness those misfortunes which in later years that attachment drew down upon himself; but, full of self-confidence, greedy of favor, jealous of his influence, inflated with a sense of his own rank and power, he regarded with the eye of an enemy merit, independence, anything which might tend to throw himself into the shade, or did not serve his ambition, flatter his vanity, or minister to his greatness. To keep his place near the Emperor had become his sole thought, and was regarded by him as his chief duty; to please the Emperor in everything was all his study and all his policy. The Napoleonic system, as the Emperor practiced it, was to him official truth, and official truth was to him all truth." In the Memoirs of Count Beugnot, published a few years ago by his grandson, the following passage occurs: "M. Maret has an excellent heart; he is therefore by nature inclined to everything good. His mind is cultivated, and, if diplomacy had not drawn him away from the profession of letters, he would have made a respectable, if not a distinguished, figure in literature. His talent lies chiefly in a singular facility for reproducing the ideas of others, and he has exercised it so largely in editing the 'Moniteur,' and in other work of the same nature, that his whole mind is, as it were, absorbed by it. It was the Abbé Siéyès who originally procured the post of Secretary to the Consulate for him. At first he failed to please the First Consul, precisely on account of those qualities which since then have endeared him to Bonaparte—his obsequiousness, his eagerness, his propensity to merge his own mind in that of another; but by

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Bonaparte, and also of the completeness of his own ascendancy.

A treaty of peace between England and France was being arranged at Amiens in the spring of 1810. Certain difficulties which had arisen between the plenipotentiaries were giving rise to some little uneasiness, and Bonaparte was anxiously expecting dispatches. A courier arrived, and brought to the Minister of Foreign Affairs the much-desired signature. M. de Talleyrand put it in his pocket and went to the First Consul. He appeared before him with that immovable countenance which he wears on every occasion. For a whole hour he remained with Bonaparte, transacting a number of important matters of business, and when all was done, "Now," said he, smiling, "I am going to give you a great pleasure; the treaty is signed, and here it is." Bonaparte was astounded at this fashion of announcing the matter. "Why did you not tell me at once?" he demanded. "Ah," replied M. de Talleyrand, "because then you would not have listened to me on any other subject. When you are pleased, you are not always pleasant." The self-control displayed in this reticence struck the Consul, "and," added M. de Talleyrand, "did not make him angry, because he saw immediately how far it might be made useful to himself."

degrees, as the First Consul absorbed authority, and became accustomed to rule alone, he grew reconciled to the Secretary of the Consulate. The despotism of the one and the favor of the other grew in the same proportion." ("Mémoirés du Comte Beugnot," vol. ii., p. 316.) Baron Ernouf has recently published an apology for the Duc de Bassano, under the title "Maret, Duc de Bassano." These several estimates, which are different without being contradictory, show that the influence of the Duc de Bassano in the Imperial councils was not beneficial to the common weal. He was apparently one of those who think that a disagreeable disclosure or unwelcome advice is more hurtful to the offerer than useful to the recipient. Such people are careful rather to foster the weaknesses than to consider the actual situation of their masters, and to serve their passions at the expense of their interests. Such flatterers are doubtless detestable, but the source of their crimes is absolute power. It is because the monarch is all-powerful that it is dangerous to displease him. All meanness, as well as all justice, emanates from the king.—P. R.

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Another person, who was really more attached to Bonaparte, and quite as demonstrative in his admiration for him as M. Maret, was Marshal Berthier, Prince of Wagram. He had served in the campaign in Egypt, and had become strongly attached to his General. Berthier's friendship for him was so great that, little as Bonaparte valued anything coming from the heart, he could not but respond to it in some degree. The sentiment was, however, very unequally divided between them, and was used by the powerful one of the two as a means of exaction. One day Bonaparte said to M. de Talleyrand: "I really can not understand how a relation that bears some appearance of friendship has established itself between Berthier and me. I don't indulge in useless sentiments, and Berthier is so uninteresting that I do not know why I should care at all about him; and yet, when I think of it, I believe I really have some liking for him." "If you do care about him," replied M. de Talleyrand, "do you know the reason why? It is because he believes in you."

These anecdotes, which I set down as they recur to my memory, did not come to my knowledge till a much later period, when my greater intimacy with M. de Talleyrand revealed to me the chief traits in Bonaparte's character. At first I was completely deceived by him, and was very happy to be so. I knew he had genius, I saw that he was disposed to make amends for the passing wrongs he did his wife, and I remarked his friendship for Berthier with pleasure; he caressed little Napoleon in my presence, and seemed to love him. I regarded him as accessible to kindly natural feelings, and my youthful imagination arrayed him in all those qualities which I desired to find in him. It is only just to him also to admit that excess of power intoxicated him; that his passions were increased in violence by the facility with which he was enabled to gratify them; but that while he was young, and as yet uncertain of the future, he frequently hesitated between the open exhibition of vice and, at least, the affectation of virtue.

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After the declaration of war with England, somebody (I do not know who) suggested to Bonaparte the idea of an invasion by means of flat-bottomed boats. I can not say with certainty whether he really believed in this plan, or whether he only used it as a pretext for collecting and increasing his army, which he assembled at the camp of Boulogne. So many people maintained that a descent upon the shores of England in this way was practicable, that it is quite possible he may have thought fate had a success of the kind in store for him. Enormous works were begun in our ports, and in some of the Belgian towns; the army marched to the coast, and Generals Soult and Ney were sent to command it at different points. The idea of a conquest of England fired the general imagination; and even the English themselves began to feel uneasy, and thought it necessary to make some preparations for defense. Attempts were made to excite the public mind against the English by dramatic representations; scenes from the life of William the Conqueror were represented at the theatres. The conquest of Hanover was easily effected, but then came the blockade of our ports that did us so much harm.

During the summer of this year (1803) a journey to Belgium was arranged, and Bonaparte required that it should be made with great magnificence. He had little trouble in persuading Mme. Bonaparte to take with her everything that could make an impression on the people to whom she was about to exhibit herself. Mme. Talhouet and I were selected to accompany her, and the Consul gave me thirty thousand francs for those expenses which he prescribed. He set out on the 24th of June, with a *cortége* of several carriages, two generals of his guard, his aides-de-camp, Duroc, two Prefects of the Palace (M. de Rémusat and a Piedmontese named Salmatoris), and commenced the journey in great pomp.

Before we set out, we went for one day to Mortefontaine, an estate which had been purchased by Joseph Bonaparte. All the family were assembled there, and a strange occur-

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rence took place. We passed the morning in walking about the gardens, which are beautiful. When dinner hour approached, a question arose about the placing of the guests. The elder Mme. Bonaparte was at Mortefontaine, and Joseph told his brother that he intended to take his mother in to dinner, and to place her on his right hand, while Mme. Bonaparte was to sit on his left. The First Consul took offense at this arrangement, which placed his wife in the second rank, and insisted that his brother should transfer their mother to that position. Joseph refused, and no argument could induce him to give way. When dinner was announced, Joseph took his mother's hand, and Lucien escorted Mme. Bonaparte. The First Consul, incensed at this opposition to his will, hurriedly crossed the room, took the arm of his wife, passed out before every one, seated her beside himself, and then, turning to me, ordered me to place myself near him. The company were all greatly embarrassed, I even more so than the others; and Mme. Joseph Bonaparte,* to whom some politeness was due, found herself at the bottom of the table, as if she were not one of the family.

The stiffness and gloom of that dinner-party may be easily imagined. The brothers were angry, Mme. Bonaparte was wretched, and I was excessively embarrassed by my prominent position. During the dinner Bonaparte did not address a single member of his family; he occupied himself with his wife, talked to me, and chose this opportune occasion to inform me that he had that morning restored to my cousin, the Vicomte de Vergennes, certain forests which had long been sequestrated on account of his emigration, but which had not been sold. I was touched by this mark of his kindness, but it was very vexatious to me that he selected such a moment to tell me of it, because the gratitude which I would otherwise have gladly expressed, and the joy which I really felt, made me appear to the observers of the little scene to be

* Joseph Bonaparte had married Mlle. Julia Clary, the daughter of a merchant at Marseilles.—P. R.

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talking freely to him, while I was really in a state of painful constraint. The remainder of the day passed drearily, as may be supposed, and we left Mortefontaine on the morrow.

An accident which happened at the beginning of our journey increased the regard which I was then happy to feel for Bonaparte and his wife. He traveled with her and one of the generals of his guard, and his carriage was preceded by one containing Duroc and three aides-de-camp. A third carriage was occupied by Mme. Talhouet, M. de Rémusat, and myself; two others followed. Shortly after we had left Compiègne, where we visited a military school, on our way to Amiens, our carriage was violently overturned. Mme. Talhouet's head was badly cut; M. de Rémusat and I were only bruised. With some trouble we were extricated from the carriage. Bonaparte, who was on in front, was told of this accident; he at once alighted from his carriage, and with Mme. Bonaparte, who was much frightened about me, hastened to join us at a cottage, whither we had been taken. I was so terrified that, as soon as I saw Bonaparte, I begged him with tears to send me back to Paris; I already disliked traveling as much as did the pigeon of La Fontaine, and in my distress I cried out that I must return to my mother and my children.

Bonaparte said a few words intended to calm me; but, finding that he could not succeed in doing so, he took my arm in his, gave orders that Mme. Talhouet should be placed in one of the carriages, and, after satisfying himself that M. de Rémusat was none the worse for the accident, led me, frightened as I was, to his own carriage, and made me get in with him. We set off again, and he took pains to cheer up his wife and me, and told us, laughingly, to kiss each other and cry, "because," he said, "that always does women good." After a while his animated conversation distracted my thoughts, and my fear of the further journey subsided. Mme. Bonaparte having referred to the grief my mother would feel if any harm happened to me, Bonaparte ques-

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tioned me about her, and appeared to be well aware of the high esteem in which she was held in society. Indeed, it was largely to this that his attention to me was due. At that period, when so many people still held back from the advances he made to them, he was greatly gratified that my mother had consented to my holding a place in his household. At that time I was in his eyes almost a personage whose example would, he hoped, be followed.

On the evening of the same day we arrived at Amiens, where we were received with enthusiasm impossible to describe. The horses were taken from the carriage, and replaced by the inhabitants, who insisted on drawing it themselves. I was the more affected by this spectacle, as it was absolutely novel to me. Alas! since I had been of an age to observe what was passing around me, I had witnessed only scenes of terror and woe, I had heard only sounds of hate and menace; and the joy of the inhabitants of Amiens, the garlands that decorated our route, the triumphal arches erected in honor of him who was represented on all these devices as the saviour of France, the crowds who fought for a sight of him, the universal blessings which could not have been uttered to order—the whole spectacle, in fact, so affected me that I could not restrain my tears. Mme. Bonaparte wept; I saw even the eyes of Bonaparte himself glisten for a moment.

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CHAPTER III.

(1803.)

Continuation of the Journey to Belgium—Opinions of the First Consul on Gratitude, on Glory, and on the French—Ghent, Malines, and Brussels—The Clergy—M. de Roquelaure—Return to Saint Cloud—Preparations for an Invasion of England—Marriage of Mme. Leclerc—Journey of the First Consul to Boulogne—Illness of M. de Rémusat—I rejoin him—Conversations with the First Consul.

On Bonaparte's arrival in town, the Prefect of the Palace was directed to summon the various persons in authority, that they might be presented to him. The prefect, the mayor, the bishop, the presidents of the tribunals, would read an address to him, and then, turning to Mme. Bonaparte, make her a little speech also. According to the mood he happened to be in, Bonaparte would listen to these discourses to the end, or interrupt them by questioning the deputation on the nature of their respective functions, or on the district in which they exercised them. He rarely put questions with an appearance of interest, but rather with the air of a man who desires to show his knowledge, and wants to see whether he can be answered. These speeches were addressed to the Republic; but any one who reads them may see that in almost every respect they might have been addressed to a sovereign. Indeed, the mayors of some of the Flemish towns went so far as to urge the Consul to "complete the happiness of the world by exchanging his precarious title for one better suited to the lofty destiny to which he was called." I was present the first time that happened, and I kept my eyes fixed upon Bonaparte. When these very words were uttered, he had some difficulty in checking the smile that

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hovered about his lips; but, putting strong control upon himself, he interrupted the orator, and replied, in a tone of feigned anger, that it would be unworthy of him to usurp an authority which must affect the existence of the Republic. Thus, like Cæsar, he repudiated the crown, though perhaps he was not ill pleased that they were beginning to offer it to him. The good people of the provinces we visited were not very far wrong; for the splendor that surrounded us, the sumptuousness of that military yet brilliant court, the strict ceremonial, the imperious tone of the master, the submission of all about him, and, finally, the expectation that homage should be paid the wife of the first magistrate, to whom the Republic certainly owed none—all this strongly resembled the progress of a king.

After these audiences, Bonaparte generally rode out on horseback; he showed himself to the people, who followed him with acclamations; he visited the public monuments and manufactories, but always in a hurried way, for he could never get over that precipitation which gave him an ill-bred air. Afterward he would give a dinner, or attend a fête which had been prepared for him, and this was always the most wearisome part of the business to him. "I am not made for pleasure," he would say, in a melancholy tone. Then he would leave the town, after having received petitions, attended to complaints, and distributed alms and presents. He was accustomed, when on a journey of this sort, to inform himself at each town he went to what public establishments were wanting there, and he would order them to be founded, in commemoration of his visit. The inhabitants would load him with blessings for this munificence. But shortly afterward a mandate from the Minister of the Interior would arrive, drawn up in this form: "In conformity with the gracious permission of the First Consul" (later it was "the Emperor"), "you are directed, citizen mayors, to have such and such a building constructed, taking care that the expenses shall be defrayed by the funds of your

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commune." Thus these towns would suddenly find themselves obliged to alter the disposition of their funds, very often at a moment when they were not sufficient for necessary expenses. The Prefect took care, however, that the orders were executed, or at least the most useful portion of of them; and it must be admitted that, from one end France to the other, everything was being embellished, and that the general prosperity was such that new works, even of the most important nature, might safely be undertaken everywhere.

At Arras, at Lille, and at Dunkirk, we had similar receptions; but it seemed to me that the enthusiasm cooled down when we got beyond the former boundaries of France. At Ghent, especially, we detected some coldness in the popular greeting. In vain did the authorities endeavor to stir up the zeal of the inhabitants; they were curious, but not enthusiastic. Bonaparte was a little annoyed, and inclined to proceed without delay. He thought better of this, however, and said in the evening to his wife: "These people are bigoted and under the influence of the priests; we must remain a long time at church to-morrow, and propitiate the clergy by some favor. In this way we shall regain lost ground." Next day he attended high mass with every appearance of devoutness; he talked to the Bishop, whom he completely captivated, and by degrees he obtained the popular acclamations he desired. At Ghent he met the daughters of the Duc de Villequier, formerly one of the four Gentlemen of the Chamber to the King. These ladies were nieces of the Bishop, and Bonaparte restored to them the beautiful estate of Villequier, with its large revenues. I had the happiness of contributing to this restitution, by urging it with all my might, both upon Bonaparte and upon his wife. The two amiable young ladies have never forgotten this to me. When I assured Bonaparte of their gratitude, "Ah," said he, "gratitude! That is a poetic word which has no meaning in times of revolution; and what I have just done would not

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prevent your friends from rejoicing if some Royalist emissary should succeed in assassinating me during this journey." And, as I betrayed the surprise with which I heard him, he continued: "You are young; you do not know what political hatred is. It is like a pair of spectacles: one sees everybody, every opinion, or every sentiment only through the glass of one's passions. Hence, nothing is bad or good of itself, but simply according to the party to which one belongs. In reality, this mode of seeing is convenient, and we profit by it; for we also have our spectacles, and, if we do not see things through our passions, we see them through our interests."

"But," I replied, "where, in such a system, do you place the applause which you do care to win? For what class of men do you spend your life in great and often perilous enterprises?"

"Ah," he answered, "one can not avoid one's destiny; he who is called can not resist. Besides, human pride finds the public it desires in that ideal world which is called posterity. He who believes that, a hundred years hence, a fine poem, or even a line in one, will recall a great action of his own, or that a painting will commemorate it, has his imagination fired by that idea. The battle-field has no dangers, the cannon roars in vain; to him it is only that sound which, a thousand years hence, will carry a brave man's name to the ears of our distant descendants."

"I shall never be able to understand," I continued, "how a man can expose himself to every sort of danger for fame's sake, if his own inward sentiment be only contempt for the men of his own time."

Here Bonaparte interrupted me quickly. "I do not despise men, madame—that is a thing you must never say; and I particularly esteem the French."

I smiled at this abrupt declaration, and, as he guessed why, he smiled also; and approaching me and pulling my ear, which was, as I have already said, a trick of his when

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he was in a good humor, he repeated, "Do you hear, madame? you must never say that I despise the French."

From Ghent we went to Antwerp, where we were received with a special ceremony. On occasions of visits from kings and princes, the people of Antwerp are in the habit of parading through their streets a giant, who never makes his appearance except on such solemn festivals. Although we were neither king nor prince, we were obliged to yield to the people's wish in this matter, and it put Bonaparte in good humor with the town of Antwerp. He occupied himself much while there with the important extension which he designed for its harbor, and gave orders for the commencement of the great works which have since been executed there.

On the way from Antwerp to Brussels we stopped at Malines for a few hours, and there we saw the new Archbishop, M. de Roquelaure.* He was Bishop of Senlis under Louis XVI., and had been the intimate friend of my great-uncle, the Count de Vergennes. I had seen a great deal of him in my childhood, and I was glad to meet him again. Bonaparte talked to him in a very insinuating manner. At this period he affected great esteem for the priests, and care for their interests. He knew how steadily religion supports royalty, and he hoped that through the priests he might get the people taught that catechism which we have since seen, in which all who did not love and obey the Emperor were threatened with eternal condemnation. For the first time since the Revolution, the clergy found the Government occupying itself with their welfare, and giving them rank and consideration. They showed themselves grateful, and were useful to Bonaparte until the moment came when he endeavored to impose his ever-growing despotism on their con-

* M. de Roquelaure had been Bishop of Senlis and Almoner to the King. He became Archbishop of Malines in 1802. The Emperor replaced him in 1808 by the Abbé de Pradt. He was a member of the Académie Française, and died in 1818. He did not belong to the family of the Duc de Roquelaure.—P. R.

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sciences, and the priests had to choose between him and their duty. At this time, however, the words, "He has reëstablished religion,"* were in every pious mouth, and told immensely in his favor.

Our entry into Brussels was magnificent. Several fine regiments awaited the First Consul at the gate, where he mounted his horse. Mme. Bonaparte found a superb carriage, presented to her by the city, awaiting her; the streets were lavishly decorated, cannon were fired, the bells were rung; the numerous clergy were assembled in great pomp on the steps of all the churches; there was an immense crowd of the population, and also many foreigners, and the weather was beautiful. I was enchanted. Our stay in Brussels was a succession of brilliant fêtes. The French ministers, Consul Lebrun, the envoys from the foreign courts who had business to arrange, came to meet us there. At Brussels I heard M. de Talleyrand reply in an adroit and flattering manner to a question suddenly put to him by Bonaparte, who asked him how he had so rapidly made his great fortune? "Nothing could be more simple," replied M. de Talleyrand; "I bought stock on the 17th Brumaire, and I sold it again on the 19th."

One Sunday we were to visit the cathedral in great state. M. de Rémusat went early in the morning to the church, to arrange the ceremony. He had been directed not to object to any honor which the clergy might propose to pay to the First Consul on this occasion. As, however, it was arranged that the priests should go to the great doors with the canopy and the cross to receive the First Consul, a question arose whether Mme. Bonaparte was to share this distinction with him, and Bonaparte did not venture to bring her so prominently forward. She was, therefore, placed in a tribune with the Second Consul. At twelve o'clock, the hour agreed upon, the clergy left the altar, and proceeded to the grand

* Bonaparte, knowing that in Belgium he would have to deal with religious people, took Cardinal Caprera with him. The Cardinal was extremely useful.

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entrance of the magnificent Church of Sainte Gudule. They awaited the arrival of the First Consul, but he did not appear. At first they were astonished, then alarmed; but they presently perceived that he had slipped into the church, and seated himself on the throné which was prepared for him. The priests, surprised and disconcerted, returned to the sanctuary, and commenced divine service. The fact was, just as he was setting out, Bonaparte was told that, at a similar ceremony, Charles V. had preferred to enter the Church of Sainte Gudule by a little side-door which had ever after been called by his name; and it seemed he had taken a fancy to use the same entrance, hoping, perhaps, that henceforth it would be called the door of Charles V. and of Bonaparte.

One morning the numerous and magnificent regiments which had been brought to Brussels were reviewed by the Consul, or, as on this occasion I ought to call him, the General. His reception by the troops was nothing short of rapturous. It was well worth seeing how he talked to the soldiers—how he questioned them one after the other respecting their campaigns or their wounds; taking particular interest in the men who had accompanied him to Egypt. I have heard Mme. Bonaparte say that her husband was in the constant habit of poring over the list of what are called the *cadres* of the army, at night, before he slept. He would go to sleep repeating the names of the corps, and even those of some of the individuals who composed them; he kept those names in a corner of his memory, and this habit came to his aid when he wanted to recognize a soldier, and to give him the pleasure of a cheering word from his General. He spoke to the subalterns in a tone of good fellowship, which delighted them all, as he reminded them of their common feats of arms. Afterward, when his armies became so numerous, when his battles became so deadly, he disdained to exercise this kind of fascination. Besides, death had extinguished so many remembrances, that in a few years it became difficult for him to find any great number of the companions of his

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early exploits; and, when he addressed his soldiers before leading them into battle, it was as a perpetually renewed posterity, to which the preceding and destroyed army had bequeathed its glory. But even this somber style of encouragement availed for a long time with a nation which believed itself to be fulfilling its destiny while sending its sons year after year to die for Bonaparte.

I have said that Bonaparte took great pleasure in recalling his campaign in Egypt; it was, indeed, his favorite theme of discourse. He had taken with him, on the journey I am describing, M. Monge the *savant*, whom he had made a senator, and whom he liked particularly, for the sole reason that he was among the number of the members of the Institute who had gone with him to Egypt. Bonaparte often talked to him of that expedition—"that land of poetry," he would say, "which was trodden by Cæsar and Pompey." He would speak with enthusiasm of the time when he appeared before the amazed Orientals like a new Prophet; for the sway he exercised over imagination, being the most complete of all, he prized more highly than any other. "In France," he said, "one must conquer everything at the point of demonstration. In Egypt we did not require our mathematics; did we, Monge?"

It was at Brussels that I began to get accustomed to M. de Talleyrand, and to shake off the earlier impression made by his disdainful manner and sarcastic disposition. The idleness of a court life makes the day seem a hundred hours long, and it happened that we often passed many of those hours together in the *salon*, waiting until it should please Bonaparte to come in or to go out. It was during one of these weary waits that I heard M. de Talleyrand complain that his family had not realized any of the plans he had formed for them. His brother, Archambault de Périgord, had just been sent into exile for having indulged in the sarcastic language common to the family. He had, however, applied it to persons of rank too high to be ridiculed with

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impunity, and he had also offended by refusing to give his daughter in marriage to Eugène de Beauharnais, to whom he had preferred Count Just de Noailles. M. de Talleyrand, who was quite as anxious as Mme. Bonaparte that his niece should marry Beauharnais, blamed his brother's conduct severely, and I could perfectly understand that such an alliance would have been advantageous to his personal policy. One of the first things that struck me, when I had talked for a little while with M. de Talleyrand, was the entire absence of any kind of illusion or enthusiasm on his part with regard to all that was passing around us. Every one else was more or less under the influence of feelings of this kind. The implicit obedience of the military officers might easily pass for zeal, and, in the case of some of them, it really was devotion. The ministers affected or felt profound admiration; M. Maret paraded his worship of the First Consul on every occasion; Berthier was happy in the sincerity of his attachment; in short, every one seemed to feel something. M. de Rémusat tried to like his post, and to esteem the man who had conferred it on him. As for myself, I cultivated every opportunity of emotion and of self-deception; and the calm indifference of M. de Talleyrand amazed me. "Good heavens!" I said to him on one occasion, "how is it possible that you can live and work without experiencing any emotion either from what passes around us, or from your own actions?" "Ah! what a woman you are, and how young!" he replied: and then he began to ridicule me, as he did every one else. His jests wounded my feelings, yet they made me laugh. I was angry with myself for being amused, and yet, because my vanity was pleased at my own comprehension of his wit, less shocked than I ought to have been at the hardness of his heart. However, I did not yet know him, and it was not till much later, when I had got over the restraint that he imposed on every one at first, that I observed the curious mixture of qualities in his character.

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On leaving Brussels we went to Liége and Maestricht, and reëntered the former boundaries of France by way of Mézières and Sedan. Mme. Bonaparte was charming during this journey, and left an impression on my mind of her kindness and graciousness which, as I found fifteen years afterward, time could not efface.

I was delighted to return to Paris, and to find myself once more among my family and free from the restraint of court life. M. de Rémusat, like myself, was tired of the idle yet restless pomp of the last six weeks; and we rejoiced in the quiet of our happy home.

On his return to Saint Cloud, Bonaparte and Mme. Bonaparte received complimentary addresses from the Corps Législatif, the tribunals, etc.; the First Consul also received a visit from the Corps Diplomatique. Shortly after this, he enhanced the dignity of the Legion of Honor by appointing M. de Lacépède its Chancellor. Since the fall of Bonaparte, certain liberal writers, and among others Mme. de Staël, have endeavored to stigmatize that institution by reviving the recollection of an English caricature which represented Bonaparte cutting up the *bonnet rouge* of the Revolution to make the crosses of the Legion. But, if he had not misused that institution as he misused everything, there would have been nothing to blame in the invention of a recompense which was an inducement to every kind of merit, without being a great expense to the State. What splendid deeds on the battle-field has that little bit of ribbon inspired! If it had been accorded to merit only in every walk of life, if it had never been given from motives of caprice or individual favor, it would have been a fine idea to assimilate all services rendered to the country, no matter of what nature, and to bestow a similar decoration upon them all. The institutions of Bonaparte in France ought not to be indiscriminately condemned. Most of them have a commendable purpose, and might have been made of advantage to the nation. But his insatiable greed of power perverted them. So intolerant

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was he of any obstacles, that he could not even endure those which arose from his own institutions, and he instantly set them aside by an arbitrary decision.

Having in the course of this year (1803) created the different senatorships, he gave a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and Prætors to the Senate. M. de Laplace was the Chancellor. Bonaparte honored him because he was a *savant*, and liked him because he was a skillful flatterer. The two Prætors were General Lefebvre and General Serrurier. M. de Fargues * was the Treasurer.

The Republican year ended as usual in the middle of September, and the anniversary of the Republic was celebrated by popular fêtes, and kept with royal pomp at the palace of the Tuileries. We heard at the same time that the Hanoverians, who had been conquered by General Mortier, had celebrated the First Consul's birthday with great rejoicings. Thus, by degrees, by appearing at first at the head of all, and then quite alone, he accustomed Europe to see France in his person only, and presented himself everywhere as the sole representative of the nation.

Bonaparte, who well knew that he would meet with resistance from those who held by the old ways of thinking, applied himself early and skillfully to gain the young, to whom he opened all the doors of advancement in life. He attached auditors to the different ministries, and gave free scope to ambition, whether in military or in civil careers. He often said that he preferred to every other advantage that of governing a new people, and the youthful generation afforded him that novelty.

The institution of the jury was also discussed in that year. I have heard that Bonaparte himself had no liking for it; but, as he intended later on to govern rather by himself than with the assistance of assemblies which he feared, he was obliged to make some concessions to their most distinguished members. By degrees, all the laws were presented

* M. de Fargues had been useful to Bonaparte on the 18th Brumaire.

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to the Council by the ministers, and were either changed into decrees, which, without any other sanction, were put in force from one end of France to the other; or else, having been received with the silent approbation of the Corps Législatif, they were passed with no more trouble than that imposed upon reporters of the Council, who had to preface them by a discourse, so that they might have some show of necessity. Lyceums were also established in all the important towns, and the study of ancient languages, which had been abolished during the Revolution, was again made obligatory in public education.

It was at this time that the flotilla of flat-bottomed boats which was to be used for the invasion of England was being constructed. Day by day it was more confidently asserted that in fine weather it would be possible for the flotilla to reach the shores of England without being impeded by ships of war. It was said that Bonaparte himself would command the expedition, and such an enterprise did not seem to be beyond the bounds of his daring or of his good fortune. Our newspapers represented England as agitated and alarmed, and in reality the English Government was not quite exempt from fear on the subject. The "Moniteur" still complained bitterly of the English liberal journals, and the gauntlet of wordy war was taken up on both sides. In France the law of conscription was put in action, and large bodies of troops were raised. Sometimes people asked what was the meaning of this great armament, and of such paragraphs as the following, which appeared in the "Moniteur": "The English journalists suspect that the great preparations for war, which the First Consul has just commenced in Italy, are intended for an Egyptian expedition."

No explanation was given. The French nation placed confidence in Bonaparte of a kind like that which some credulous minds feel in magic; and, as his success was believed to be infallible, it was not difficult to obtain a tacit consent to all his operations from a people naturally prone

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to worship success. At that time a few wise heads began to perceive that he would not be useful to us; but, as the general dread of the Revolutionary Government still proclaimed him to be necessary, no opposition could be made to his authority without the risk of facilitating the revolt of that party, which it was believed he alone could control.

In the mean time he was always active and energetic; and, as it did not suit him that the public mind should be left to repose, which leads to reflection, he aroused apprehension and disturbance in every way that might be useful to himself. A letter from the Comte d'Artois, taken from the "Morning Chronicle," was printed about this time; it offered the services of the *émigrés* to the King of England, in case of a descent upon his coasts. Rumors were spread of certain attempts made in the eastern departments; and since the war in La Vendée had been followed by the inglorious proceedings of the Chouans, people had become accustomed to the idea that any political movement set on foot in that part of France had pillage and incendiarism for its objects. In fact, there seemed no chance of quietness except in the duration of the established Government; and when certain friends of liberty deplored its loss—for the new liberal institutions were of little value in their eyes because they were the work of absolute power—they were met with the following argument, which was perhaps justified by circumstances: "After the storm through which we have passed, and amid the strife of so many parties, superior force only can give us liberty; and, so long as that force tends to promote principles of order and morality, we ought not to regard ourselves as straying from the right road; for the creator will disappear, but that which he has created will remain with us."

While more or less disturbance was thus kept up by his orders, Bonaparte himself maintained a peaceful attitude. He had returned to his usual orderly and busy life at Saint Cloud, and we passed our days as I have already described.

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His brothers were all employed *—Joseph, at the camp of Boulogne; Louis, at the Council of State; Jérome, the youngest, in America, whither he had been sent, and where he was well received by the Anglo-Americans. Bonaparte's sisters, who were now in the enjoyment of wealth, vied with each other in the decoration of the houses which the First Consul had given them, and in the luxury of their furniture and equipment. Eugène de Beauharnais occupied himself exclusively in his military duties; his sister lived a dull and quiet life.

Mme. Leclerc had inspired Prince Borghese (who had not long arrived in France from Rome) with an ardent attachment, which she returned. The Prince asked her hand of Bonaparte, but his demand was at first refused. I do not know what the motive of his refusal was, but think it may perhaps have been dictated by his vanity, which would have been hurt by the supposition that he desired to be relieved of any family claims; and probably, also, he did not wish to appear to accept a first proposal with alacrity. But, as the *liaison* between his sister and the Prince became publicly known, the Consul consented at last to legitimize it by a marriage, which took place at Mortefontaine while he was at Boulogne.

He set out to visit the camp and the flotilla on the 3d of November, 1803. This time his journey was of an entirely military character. He was accompanied only by the generals of his guard, by his aides-de-camp, and by M. de Rémusat.

When they arrived at Pont de Briques, a little village about a league from Boulogne, where Bonaparte had fixed his headquarters, my husband fell dangerously ill. So soon as I heard of his illness I set out to join him, and arrived at Pont de Briques in the middle of the night. Entirely occupied by my anxiety, I had thought of nothing but of the

* It was at the end of the autumn or the beginning of winter, in 1803, that Lucien married Mme. Jouberthon and quarreled with his brother.

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state in which I should find the invalid. But, when I got out of the carriage, I was rather disconcerted by finding myself alone in the midst of a camp, and not knowing what the First Consul would think of my arrival. I was reassured, however, by the servants, who told me I was expected, and that a room had been set apart for me two days before. I passed the remainder of the night there, waiting until daylight before I saw my husband, as I did not like to risk disturbing him. I found him greatly pulled down by illness, but he was so rejoiced to see me that I congratulated myself on having come without asking permission.

In the morning Bonaparte sent for me. I was so agitated that I could hardly speak. He saw this the moment I entered the room, and he kissed me, made me sit down, and restored me to composure by his first words. "I was expecting you," he said. "Your presence will cure your husband." At these words I burst into tears. He appeared touched, and endeavored to console me. Then he directed me to come every day to dine and breakfast with him, laughing as he said, "I must look after a woman of your age among so many soldiers." He asked me how I had left his wife. A little while before his departure some more secret visits from Mlle. Georges had given rise to fresh domestic disagreements. "She troubles herself," he said, "a great deal more than is necessary. Josephine is always afraid that I shall fall seriously in love. Does she not know, then, that I am not made for love? For what is love? A passion which sets all the universe on one side, and on the other the beloved object. I certainly am not of a nature to give myself up to any such exclusive feeling. What, then, do these fancies, into which my affections do not enter, matter to her? This," he continued, looking at me seriously, "is what her friends ought to dwell upon; and, above all, they ought not to try to increase their influence over her by fostering her jealousy." There was in his last words a tone of suspicion and severity which I did not deserve, and I think he knew that very

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well; but he never missed an opportunity of carrying out his favorite system, which was to keep one's mind what he called "breathless"; that is to say, constantly anxious.

He remained at Pont de Briques for ten days after I arrived there. My husband's malady was a painful one, but the doctors were not alarmed. With the exception of one quarter of an hour during which the First Consul's breakfast lasted, I spent the morning with my dear invalid. Bonaparte went to the camp every day, reviewed the troops, visited the flotilla, and assisted at some slight skirmishes, or rather at an exchange of cannon-balls, between us and the English, who constantly cruised in front of the harbor and tried to molest our workmen.

At six o'clock Bonaparte returned, and then I was summoned. Occasionally some of the officers of his household, the Minister of Marine or the Minister of Public Works, who had accompanied him, were invited to dinner. At other times we dined *tête-à-tête*, and then he talked on a multitude of subjects. He spoke of his own character, and described himself as having always been of a melancholy temperament—far more so than any of his comrades. My memory has faithfully preserved all he said to me. The following is a correct summary of it:

"I was educated," he said, "at a military school, and I showed no aptitude for anything but the exact sciences. Every one said of me, 'That child will never be good for anything but geometry.' I kept aloof from my schoolfellows. I had chosen a little corner in the school-grounds, where I would sit and dream at my ease; for I have always liked reverie. When my companions tried to usurp possession of this corner, I defended it with all my might. I already knew by instinct that my will was to override that of others, and that what pleased me was to belong to me. I was not liked at school. It takes time to make one's self liked; and, even when I had nothing to do, I always felt vaguely that I had no time to lose.

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"I entered the service, and soon grew tired of garrison work. I began to read novels, and they interested me deeply. I even tried to write some. This occupation brought out something in my imagination which mingled itself with the positive knowledge I had acquired; and I often let myself dream, in order that I might afterward measure my dreams by the compass of my reason. I threw myself into an ideal world, and I endeavored to find out in what precise points it differed from the actual world in which I lived. I have always liked analysis; and, if I were to be seriously in love, I should analyze my love bit by bit. *Why?* and *How?* are questions so useful that they can not be too often asked. I conquered, rather than studied, history; that is to say, I did not care to retain, and did not retain, anything that could not give me a new idea; I disdained all that was useless, but took possession of certain results which pleased me.

"I did not understand much about the Revolution, but I approved of it. Equality, which was to elevate myself, attracted me. On the 20th of June I was in Paris, and I saw the populace marching upon the Tuileries. I have never liked popular movements, and I was indignant at the violent deeds of that day. I thought the ringleaders in the attack very imprudent, for I said to myself, 'It is not they who will profit by this revolution.' But, when I was told that Louis had put the red cap on his head, I came to the conclusion that he had ceased to reign; for in politics there is no resurrection.

"On the 10th of August I felt that, had I been called upon, I would have defended the King. I set myself against those who founded the Republic by the people. Besides, I saw men in plain clothes attacking men in uniform, and I could not stand that.

"One evening I was at the theatre; it was the 12th Vendémiaire. I heard it said about me that next day *du train* might be looked for. You know that was the usual expression of the Parisians, who regarded the various changes of

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government with indifference, as those changes did not disturb their business, their pleasures, or even their dinners. After the Terror, people were satisfied with anything, so that they were allowed to live quietly.

"I heard it said that the Assembly was sitting in permanence; I went there, and found all confusion and hesitation. Suddenly I heard a voice say from the middle of the hall, 'If any one here knows the address of General Bonaparte, he is begged to go and tell him that he is expected at the Committee of the Assembly.' I have always observed with interest how chance interferes in certain events, and this chance decided me. I went to the Committee.

"There I found several terrified deputies, Cambacérès among others. They expected to be attacked the next day, and they could not come to any resolution. They asked my advice; I answered by asking for guns. This proposition so alarmed them that the whole night passed without their coming to any decision. In the morning there was very bad news. Then they put the whole business into my hands, and afterward began to discuss whether they had the right to repel force by force. 'Are you going to wait,' I asked them, 'until the people give you permission to fire upon them? I am committed in this matter; you have appointed me to defend you; it is right that you should leave me to act.' Thereupon I left these lawyers to stultify themselves with words. I put the troops in motion, and pointed two cannons with terrible effect from Saint Roch; the army of citizens and the conspirators were swept away in an instant.

"But I had shed Parisian blood! What sacrilege! It was necessary to obliterate the effect of such a deed. I felt myself more and more urgently called upon to do something. I asked for the command of the army of Italy. Everything had to be put in order in that army, both men and things. Only youth can have patience, because it has the future before it. I set out for Italy with ill-trained soldiers, who were, however, full of zeal and daring. In the midst of the

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troops I had wagons placed, and escorted on the march, although they were empty. These I called the treasure-chests of the army. I put it in the order of the day that shoes should be distributed to the recruits: no one would wear them. I promised my soldiers that fortune and glory should await us behind the Alps; I kept my word, and ever since then the army would follow me to the end of the world.

"I made a splendid campaign; I became a person of importance in Europe. On the one hand, with the assistance of my orders of the day, I maintained the revolutionary system; on the other hand, I secretly conciliated the *émigrés* by allowing them to form certain hopes. It is easy to deceive that party, because it starts always not from what exists, but from what it wishes to believe. I received magnificent offers of recompense if I would follow the example of General Monk; the Pretender even wrote to me in his vague and florid style; I conquered the Pope more effectually by not going to Rome than if I had burned his capital. In short, I became important and formidable; and the Directory, although I made them very uneasy, could not bring any formal accusation against me.

"I have been reproached with having favored the 18th Fructidor; they might as well reproach me with having supported the Revolution. It was necessary to take advantage of the Revolution, and to derive some profit from the blood that had been shed. What! were we to give ourselves up unconditionally to the princes of the house of Bourbon, who would have thrown in our teeth all the misfortunes we had suffered since their departure, and would have imposed silence upon us, because we had solicited their return? Were we to exchange our victorious flag for that white banner which had mingled with the standards of our enemies? Was I to content myself with a few millions and a petty dukedom? The part of Monk is not a difficult one to play; it would have given me less trouble than the Egyptian campaign, or even than the 18th Brumaire; but can anything

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teach princes who have never seen a battle-field? To what did the return of Charles II. lead the English, except the dethronement of James II.? Had it been necessary, I should certainly have dethroned the Bourbons a second time, so that the best thing they could have done would have been to get rid of me.

"When I returned to France, I found public opinion in a lethargic condition. In Paris—and Paris is France—people can never interest themselves in things if they do not care about persons. The customs of an old monarchy had taught them to personify everything. This habit of mind is bad for a people who desire liberty seriously; but Frenchmen can no longer desire anything seriously, except perhaps it be equality; and even that they would renounce willingly if every one could flatter himself that he was the first. To be equals, with everybody uppermost, is the secret of the vanity of all of you; every man among you must, therefore, be given the hope of rising. The great difficulty of the Directory was that no one cared about them, and that people began to care a good deal about me.

"I do not know what would have happened to me had I not conceived the happy thought of going to Egypt. When I embarked I did not know but that I might be bidding an eternal farewell to France; but I had no doubt that she would recall me. The charm of Oriental conquest drew my thoughts away from Europe more than I should have believed possible. My imagination interfered this time again with my actions; but I think it died out at Saint Jean d'Acre. However that may be, I shall never allow it to interfere with me again.

"In Egypt I found myself free from the wearisome restraints of civilization. I dreamed all sorts of things, and I saw how all that I dreamed might be realized. I created a religion. I pictured myself on the road to Asia, mounted on an elephant, with a turban on my head, and in my hand a new Koran, which I should compose according to my own

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ideas. I would have the combined experience of two worlds to set about my enterprise; I was to have ransacked, for my own advantage, the whole domain of history; I was to have attacked the English power in India, and renewed my relations with old Europe by my conquest. The time which I passed in Egypt was the most delightful part of my life, for it was the most ideal. Fate decided against my dreams; I received letters from France; I saw that there was not a moment to lose. I reverted to the realities of life, and I returned to Paris—to Paris, where the gravest interests of the country are discussed in the *entr'acte* of an opera.

"The Directory trembled at my return. I was very cautious; that is one of the epochs of my life in which I have acted with the soundest judgment. I saw the Abbé Siéyès, and promised him that his verbose constitution should be put into effect; I received the chiefs of the Jacobins and the agents of the Bourbons; I listened to advice from everybody, but I only gave it in the interest of my own plans. I hid myself from the people, because I knew that when the time came curiosity to see me would make them run after me. Every one was taken in my toils; and, when I became the head of the State, there was not a party in France which did not build some special hope upon my success."

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CHAPTER IV.

(1803–1804.)

Continuation of the First Consul's Conversations at Boulogne—Reading of the Tragedy of "Philippe Auguste"—My new Impressions—Return to Paris—Mme. Bonaparte's Jealousy—Winter Fêtes of 1804—M. de Fontanes—M. Fouché—Savary—Pichegru—Arrest of General Moreau.

One evening, while we were at Boulogne, Bonaparte turned the conversation upon literature. Lemercier, the poet, whom Bonaparte liked, had just finished a tragedy, called "Philippe Auguste," which contained allusions to the First Consul, and had brought the manuscript to him. Bonaparte took it into his head to read this production aloud to me. It was amusing to hear a man, who was always in a hurry when he had nothing to do, trying to read Alexandrine verses, of which he did not know the meter, and pronouncing them so badly that he did not seem to understand what he read. Besides, he no sooner opened any book than he wanted to criticise it. I asked him to give me the manuscript, and I read it out myself. Then he began to talk; he took the play out of my hand, struck out whole passages, made several marginal notes, and found fault with the plot and the characters. He did not run much risk of spoiling the piece, for it was very bad.* Singularly enough, when he had done reading, he told me he did not wish the author to know that all these erasures and corrections were made by so important a hand, and he directed me to take them upon myself. I objected to this, as may be supposed. I had great difficulty

* This piece was never acted, nor, I believe, printed.—P. R.

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in convincing him that, as it might be thought strange that even he should thus have meddled with an author's manuscript, it would be contrary to all the *convenances* for me to have taken such a liberty. "Well, well," said he, "perhaps you are right; but on this, as on every other occasion, I own I do not like that vague and leveling phrase, the *convenances*, which you women are always using. It is a device of fools to raise themselves to the level of people of intellect; a sort of social gag, which obstructs the strong mind and only serves the weak. It may be all very well for women: they have not much to do in this life; but you must be aware that I, for example, can not be bound by the *convenances*."

"But," I replied, "is not the application of these laws to the conduct of life like that of the dramatic unities to the drama? They give order and regularity, and they do not really trammel genius, except when it would, without their control, err against good taste."

"Ah, good taste! That is another of those classical words which I do not adopt.* It is perhaps my own fault, but there are certain rules which mean nothing to me. For example, what is called 'style,' good or bad, does not affect me. I care only for the force of the thought. I used to like Ossian, but it was for the same reason which made me delight in the murmur of the winds and waves. In Egypt I tried to read the 'Iliad'; but I got tired of it. As for French poets, I understand none of them except Corneille. That man understood politics, and if he had been trained to public affairs he would have been a statesman. I think I appreciate him more truly than any one else does, because I exclude all the dramatic sentiments from my view of him. For example, it is only lately I have come to understand the *dénouement* of 'Cinna.' At first I regarded it as merely a contrivance for a pathetic fifth act; for really, clemency,

* M. de Talleyrand once said to the Emperor, "Good taste is your personal enemy; if you could have got rid of it by cannon-balls, it would long ago have ceased to exist."

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properly speaking, is such a poor little virtue, when it is not founded on policy, that to turn Augustus suddenly into a kind-hearted prince appeared to me an unworthy climax. However, I saw Monvel act in the tragedy one night, and the mystery of the great conception was revealed to me. He pronounced the 'Soyons amis, Cinna,' in so cunning and subtle a tone, that I saw at once the action was only a feint of the tyrant, and I approved as a calculation what had appeared to me silly as a sentiment. The line should always be so delivered that, of all those who hear it, only Cinna is deceived.

"As for Racine, he pleases me in 'Iphigénie.' That piece, while it lasts, makes one breathe the poetic air of Greece. In 'Britannicus' he has been trammeled by Tacitus, against whom I am prejudiced, because he does not sufficiently explain his meaning. The tragedies of Voltaire are passionate, but they do not go deeply into human nature. For instance, his Mahomet is neither a prophet nor an Arab. He is an impostor, who might have been educated at the École Polytechnique, for he uses power as I might use it in an age like the present. And then, the murder of the father by the son is a useless crime. Great men are never cruel except from necessity.

"As for comedy, it interests me about as much as the gossip of your drawing-rooms. I understand your admiration of Molière, but I do not share it; he has placed his personages in situations which have no attractions for me."

From these observations it is plain that Bonaparte cared only to observe human nature when it was struggling with the great chances of life, and that man in the abstract interested him but little. In conversations of this kind the time I spent at Boulogne with the First Consul was passed, and it was at the close of my sojourn there that I underwent the first experience that inspired me with mistrust of persons among whom I was obliged to live at Court. The officers of the household could not believe that a woman might re-

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main for hours together with their master, simply talking with him on matters of general interest, and they drew conclusions which were injurious to my character. I may now venture to say that the purity of my mind, and my life-long attachment to my husband, prevented my even conceiving the possibility of such a suspicion as that which was formed in the Consul's ante-chamber, while I was conversing with him in his salon. When Bonaparte returned to Paris, his aides-de-camp talked about my long interviews with him, and Mme. Bonaparte took fright at their stories; so that when, after a month's stay at Pont de Briques, my husband was sufficiently recovered to bear the journey, and we returned to Paris, my jealous patroness received me coldly.

I returned full of gratitude toward the First Consul. He had received me so kindly; he had shown such interest in the state of my husband's health; his attention to me had so much soothed my troubled and anxious mind, and had been so great a resource in that solitary place; and I was so much flattered by the pleasure he seemed to take in my society, that on my return I told every one, with the eager gratitude of one twenty-three years old, of the extreme kindness he had shown me. My friend, who was really attached to me, advised me to be careful of my words, and apprised me of the impression they had made. I remember to this hour that her hint struck like a dagger to my heart. It was the first time I had suffered injustice; my youth and all my feelings revolted against such an accusation. Stern experience only can steel us against the unjust judgments of the world, and perhaps we ought to regret the time when they had the power to wound us deeply. My friend's warning had, however, explained Mme. Bonaparte's conduct toward me. One day, when I was more hurt by this than usual, I could not refrain from saying to her, with tears in my eyes, "What, madame! do you suspect me?" As she was very kind and always easily touched by passing emotions, she embraced me, and thenceforth treated me with her former cordiality. But she

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did not understand my feelings. There was nothing in her mind which corresponded to my just indignation; and, without endeavoring to ascertain whether my relations with her husband at Bolougne had been such as they were represented to her, she was content to conclude that in any case the affair had been merely temporary, since I did not, when under her own eyes, depart from my usual reserve toward Bonaparte. In order to justify herself, she told me that the Bonaparte family had spread injurious reports against me during my absence. "Do you not perceive," I asked her, "that, rightly or wrongly, it is believed here that my tender attachment to you, madame, makes me clear-sighted to what is going on, and that, feeble as my counsels are, they may help you to act with prudence? Political jealousy spreads suspicion broadcast everywhere, and, insignificant as I am, I do believe they want to make you quarrel with me." Mme. Bonaparte agreed in the truth of my observation; but she had not the least idea that I could feel aggrieved because it had not occurred to herself in the first instance. She acknowledged that she had reproached her husband about me, and he had evidently amused himself by leaving her in doubt. These occurrences opened my eyes about the people among whom I lived to an extent which alarmed me and upset all my former feelings toward them. I began to feel that the ground which I had trodden until then with all the confidence of ignorance was not firm; I knew that from the kind of annoyance I had just experienced I should never again be free.

The First Consul, on leaving Boulogne, had declared, in the order of the day, that he was pleased with the army; and in the "Moniteur" of November 12, 1803, we read the following: "It was remarked as a presage that, in the course of the excavations for the First Consul's camp, a war hatchet was found, which probably belonged to the Roman army that invaded Britain. There were also medals of William the Conqueror found at Ambleteuse, where the First Consul's tent was pitched. It must be admitted that these cir-

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cumstances are singular, and they appear still more strange when it is borne in mind that when General Bonaparte visited the ruins of Pelusium, in Egypt, he found there a medallion of Julius Cæsar."

The allusion was not a very fortunate one, for, notwithstanding the medallion of Julius Cæsar, Bonaparte was obliged to leave Egypt; but these little parallels, dictated by the ingenious flattery of M. Maret, pleased his master immensely, and Bonaparte was confident that they were not without effect upon the country.

In the journals every effort was made at that time to excite the popular imagination on the subject of the invasion of England. I do not know whether Bonaparte really believed that such an adventure was possible, but he appeared to do so, and the expense incurred in the construction of flat-bottomed boats was considerable. The war of words between the English newspapers and the "Moniteur" continued. We read in the "Times," "It is said that the French have made Hanover a desert, and they are now about to abandon it"; to which a note in the "Moniteur" immediately replied, "Yes, when you abandon Malta." The Bishops issued pastorals, in which they exhorted the nation to arm itself for a just war. "Choose men of good courage," said the Bishop of Arras, "and go forth to fight Amalek. Bossuet has said, 'To submit to the public orders is to submit to the orders of God, who establishes empires.'"

This quotation from Bossuet reminds me of a story which M. Bourlier, the Bishop of Evreux, used to tell. It related to the time when the Council was assembled at Paris with a view to inducing the Bishops to oppose the decrees of the Pope. "Sometimes," said the Bishop of Evreux, "the Emperor would have us all summoned, and would begin a theological discussion with us. He would address himself to the most recalcitrant among us, and say, 'My religion is that of Bossuet; he is my Father of the Church; he defended our liberties. I want to commence his work and to

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maintain your dignity. Do you understand me?' Speaking thus, and pale with anger, he would clap his hand on the hilt of his sword. The ardor with which he was ready to defend us made me tremble, and this singular amalgamation of the name of Bossuet and the word liberty, with his own threatening gestures, would have made me smile if I had not been too heavy-hearted at the prospect of the hard times which I foresaw for the Church."

I now return to the winter of 1804. This winter passed as the preceding one had done, in balls and fêtes at Court and in Paris, and in the organization of the new laws which were presented to the Corps Législatif. Mme. Bacciochi, who had a very decided liking for M. de Fontanes, spoke of him so often at that time to her brother, that her influence, added to Bonaparte's own high opinion of the academician, determined him to make M. de Fontanes President of the Corps Législatif. This selection appeared strange to some people; but a man of letters would do as well as any other President for what Bonaparte intended to make of the Corps Législatif. M. de Fontanes had to deliver harangues to the Emperor under most difficult circumstances, but he always acquitted himself with grace and distinction. He had but little strength of character, but his ability told when he had to speak in public, and his good taste lent him dignity and impressiveness. Perhaps that was not an advantage for Bonaparte. Nothing is so dangerous for sovereigns as to have their abuses of power clothed in the glowing colors of eloquence, when they figure before nations; and this is especially dangerous in France, where forms are held in such high esteem. How often have the Parisians, although in the secret of the farce the Government was acting, lent themselves to the deception with a good grace, simply because the actors did justice to that delicacy of taste which demands that each shall do his best with the *rôle* assigned to him?

In the course of the month of January, the "Moniteur"

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published a selection of articles from the English journals, in which the differences between Bavaria and Austria, and the probabilities of a continental war, were discussed. Paragraphs of this kind were from time to time inserted in the newspapers, without any comment, as if to prepare us for what might happen. These intimations—like the clouds over mountain summits, which fall apart for a moment now and then, and afford a glimpse of what is passing behind—allowed us to have momentary peeps at the important discussions which were taking place in Europe, so that we should not be much surprised when they resulted in a rupture. After each glimpse the clouds would close again, and we would remain in darkness until the storm burst.

I am about to speak of an important epoch, concerning which my memory is full and faithful. It is that of the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal, and the crime to which it led. With respect to General Moreau, I shall repeat what I have heard said, but shall be careful to affirm nothing. I think it well to preface this narrative by a brief explanation of the state of affairs at that time. Certain persons, somewhat closely connected with politics, were beginning to assert that France felt the necessity of hereditary right in the governing power. Political courtiers, and honest, sincere revolutionists, seeing that the tranquillity of the country depended on one life, were discussing the instability of the Consulate. By degrees the thoughts of all were once more turned to monarchy, and this would have had its advantages if they could have agreed to establish a monarchy tempered by the laws. Revolutions have this great disadvantage, that they divide public opinion into an infinite number of varieties, which are all modified by circumstances. This it is which gives opportunity to that despotism which comes after revolutions. To restrain the power of Bonaparte, it would have been necessary to venture on uttering the word "Liberty"; but as, only a few years before, that word had been used from one end of France to the other as a disguise for

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the worst kind of slavery, it inspired an unreasonable but fatal repugnance.

The Royalists, finding that day by day Bonaparte was departing more widely from the path they had expected he would take, were much disturbed. The Jacobins, whose opposition the First Consul feared much more, were secretly preparing for action, for they perceived that it was to their antagonists that the Government was giving guarantees. The Concordat, the advances made to the old nobility, the destruction of revolutionary equality, all these things constituted an encroachment upon them. How happy would France have been had Bonaparte contended only against the factions! But, to have done that, he must have been animated solely by the love of justice, and guided by the counsels of a generous mind.

When a sovereign, no matter what his title may be, sides with one or other of the violent parties which stir up civil strife, it is certain that he has hostile intentions against the rights of citizens, who have confided those rights to his keeping. Bonaparte, in order to fix his despotic yoke upon France, found himself obliged to come to terms with the Jacobins; and, unfortunately, there are persons whom no guarantee but that of crime will satisfy. Their ally must involve himself in some of their iniquities. This motive had a great deal to do with the death of the Duc d'Enghien; and I am convinced that all which happened at that time was the result of no violent feeling, of no blind revenge, but simply of a Machiavellian policy, resolved to smooth its own path at any cost. Neither was it for the gratification of vanity that Bonaparte wanted to change his title of Consul for that of Emperor. We must not believe that he was always ruled by insatiable passions; he was capable of controlling them by calculation, and, if in the end he allowed himself to be led away, it was because he became intoxicated by success and flattery. The comedy of republican equality, which he was obliged to play so long as he remained Consul, annoyed

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him, and in reality only deceived those who were willing to be deceived. It resembled the political pretenses of ancient Rome, when the Emperors from time to time had themselves reëlected by the Senate. I have heard persons who, having put on the love of liberty like a garment, and yet paid assiduous court to Bonaparte while he was First Consul, declare that they had quite withdrawn their esteem from him so soon as he conferred the title of Emperor upon himself. I never could understand their argument. How was it possible that the authority which he exercised almost from the moment of his entrance into the government did not enlighten them as to his actual position? Might it not rather be said that he gave a proof of sincerity in his assumption of a title whose real powers he exercised?

At the epoch of which I am treating, it became necessary that the First Consul should strengthen his position by some new measure. The English, who had been threatened, were secretly exciting disturbances to act as diversions from the projects formed against themselves; their relations with the Chouans were resumed; and the Royalists regarded the Consular Government as a mere transition state from the Directory to the Monarchy. One man only stood in the way; it became easy to conclude that he must be got rid of.

I remember to have heard Bonaparte say in the summer of that year (1804) that for once events had hurried him, and that he had not intended to establish royalty until two years later. He had placed the police in the hands of the Minister of Justice. This was a sound and moral proceeding, but it was contradicted by his intention that the magistracy should use that police as it had been used when it was a revolutionary institution. I have already said that Bonaparte's first ideas were generally good and great. To conceive and carry them out was to exercise his power, but to submit to them afterward savored of abdication. He was unable to endure the dominion even of any of his own institutions. Restrained by the slow and regular forms of justice, and also by the

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feebleness and mediocrity of his Chief Judge, he surrounded himself with innumerable police agents, and by degrees regained confidence in Fouché, who was an adept in the art of making himself necessary. Fouché, a man of keen and far-seeing intellect, a Jacobin grown rich, and consequently disgusted with some of the principles of that party—with which, however, he still remained connected, so that he might have support should trouble arise—had no objection to invest Bonaparte with royalty. His natural flexibility made him always ready to accept any form of government in which he saw a post for himself. His habits were more revolutionary than his principles, and the only state of things, I believe, which he could not have endured, would have been one which should make an absolute nonentity of him. To make use of him one must thoroughly understand his disposition, and be very cautious in dealing with him, remembering that he needed troublous times for the full display of his capacity; for, as he had no passions and no aversions, he rose at such times superior to the generality of those about him, who were all more or less actuated by either fear or resentment.

Fouché has denied that he advised the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. Unless there is complete certainty of the fact, I see no reason for bringing the accusation of a crime against a man who positively denies it. Besides, Fouché, who was very far-sighted, must have foreseen that such a deed would give only a temporary guarantee to the party which Bonaparte wanted to win. He knew the First Consul too well to fear that he would think of replacing the King on a throne which he might occupy himself, and there is little doubt that, with the information he possessed, he would have pronounced the murder of the Duc d'Enghien to be a mistake.

M. de Talleyrand's plans were also served by his advice that Bonaparte should invest himself with royalty. That proceeding would suit M. de Talleyrand to a nicety. His enemies, and even Bonaparte himself, have accused him of having advised the murder of the unhappy prince. But

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Bonaparte and his enemies are not credible on this point; the well-known character of M. de Talleyrand is against the truth of the statement. He has said to me more than once that Bonaparte informed him and the two Consuls of the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien and of his own unalterable determination at the same time. He added that they all three saw that words were useless, and therefore kept silence. That was indeed a deplorable weakness, but one very common to M. de Talleyrand, who would not think of remonstrating for the sake of conscience only, when he knew that a line of action had been decided upon. Opposition and bold resistance may take effect upon any nature, however resolute. A sovereign of a cruel and sanguinary disposition will sometimes sacrifice his inclination to the force of reason arrayed against it. Bonaparte was not cruel either by inclination or on system; he merely wanted to carry his point by the quickest and surest method. He has himself said that at that time he was obliged to get rid of both Jacobins and Royalists. The imprudence of the latter furnished him with this fatal opportunity. He seized it; and what I shall hereafter have to relate will show that it was with the coolest of calculation, or rather of sophistry, that he shed illustrious and innocent blood.

A few days after the first return of the King, the Duc de Rovigo [General Savary] presented himself at my house one morning.* He then tried to clear himself from the accusations that were brought against him. He spoke to me of the death of the Duc d'Enghien. "The Emperor and I," he said, "were deceived on that occasion. One of the inferior agents in Georges Cadoudal's conspiracy had been suborned by my police. He came to us, and stated that one night, when all the conspirators were assembled, the secret arrival of an important chief who could not yet be named

* The Duc de Rovigo knew how intimate my husband and I were with M. de Talleyrand, and he was anxious to induce us to further his interests in that quarter.

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had been announced to them. A few nights later, a person appeared among them, to whom the others paid great respect. The spy described the unknown so as to give us the impression that he was a prince of the house of Bourbon. About the same time the Duc d'Enghien had established himself at Ettenheim, with the intention, no doubt, of awaiting the result of the conspiracy. The police agents wrote that he sometimes disappeared for several days together. We concluded that at these times he came to Paris, and his arrest was resolved upon. Afterward, when the spy was confronted with the persons who had been arrested, he recognized Pichegru as the important personage of whom he had spoken; and when I told this to Bonaparte he exclaimed, with a stamp of his foot, 'Ah, the wretch! what has he made me do?'"

To return to the facts. Pichegru arrived in France on the 15th of January, 1804, and from the 25th of January was concealed in Paris. It was known that, in the year 5 of the Republic, General Moreau had denounced him to the Government for keeping up relations with the house of Bourbon. Moreau was supposed to hold Republican opinions; but he had probably then exchanged them for the idea of a constitutional monarchy. I do not know whether his family would now defend him as earnestly as they did then from the accusation of having aided the plans of the Royalists, nor do I know whether implicit confidence is to be placed on confessions made in the reign of Louis XVIII. The conduct of Moreau in 1813, and the honor paid to his memory by our princes, might, however, fairly lead us to believe that they had reason to count on him previously. At the period of which I am now speaking, Moreau was deeply irritated against Bonaparte. It has never been doubted that he visited Pichegru in secret; he certainly kept silence about the conspiracy. Some of the Royalists who were arrested at this time declared that he had merely displayed that prudent hesitation which waits to declare itself for the success of a

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party. Moreau, it was said, was a feeble and insignificant man, except on the field of battle, and overweighted by his reputation. "There are persons," said Bonaparte, "who do not know how to wear their fame. The part of Monk suited Moreau perfectly. In his place I should have acted as he did, only more cleverly."

It is not, however, in order to justify Bonaparte that I mention my doubts. Whatever was Moreau's character, his fame was real; it ought to have been respected, and an old comrade in arms, grown discontented and embittered, ought to have been excused. A reconciliation with him, even if it had only been a result of that political calculation which Bonaparte discerned in the "Auguste" of Corneille, would still have been the wisest proceeding. But I do not doubt that Bonaparte was sincerely convinced of what he called Moreau's *moral treason*, and he held that to be sufficient for the law and for justice, because he always refused to look at the true aspect of anything which was displeasing to himself. He was assured that proofs to justify the condemnation of Moreau were not wanting. He found himself committed to a line of action, and afterward he refused to recognize anything but party spirit in the equity of the tribunals; and, besides, he knew the most injurious thing which could happen to him would be that this interesting prisoner should be declared innocent. When he found himself on the point of being compromised, he would stop at nothing. From this cause arose the deplorable incidents of the famous trial. The conspiracy had been a subject of conversation for several days. On the 17th of February, 1804, I went to the Tuileries in the morning. The Consul was in the room with his wife; I was announced and shown in. Mme. Bonaparte was in great distress; her eyes were red with crying. Bonaparte was sitting near the fireplace, with little Napoleon * on his

* The eldest child of Mme. Louis Bonaparte, afterward Queen Hortense. He was born on the 10th of October, 1802, and died of croup on the 5th of May, 1807.—P. R.

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knees. He looked grave, but not agitated, and was playing mechanically with the child.

"Do you know what I have done?" said he. I answered in the negative. "I have just given an order for Moreau's arrest." I could not repress a start. "Ah, you are astonished," said he. "There will be a great fuss about this, will there not? Of course, it will be said that I am jealous of Moreau, that this is revenge, and other petty nonsense of the same kind. I jealous of Moreau! Why, he owes the best part of his reputation to me. It was I who left a fine army with him, and kept only recruits with myself in Italy. I wanted nothing more than to get on well with him. I certainly was not afraid of him; I am not afraid of anybody, and less of Moreau than of other people. I have hindered him from committing himself twenty times over. I warned him that there would be mischief made between us; he knew that as well as I did. But he is weak and conceited; he allows women to lead him, and the various parties have urged him."

While he was speaking Bonaparte rose, approached his wife, and, taking her by the chin, made her hold up her head. "Ha!" he said, "every one has not got a good wife, like me. You are crying, Josephine. What for, eh? Are you frightened?" "No; but I don't like to think of what will be said." "What? How can that be helped?" Then, turning to me, he added, "I am not actuated by any enmity or any desire of vengeance; I have reflected deeply before arresting Moreau. I might have shut my eyes, and given him time to fly, but it would have been said that I did not dare to bring him to trial. I have the means of convicting him. He is guilty; I am the Government; the whole thing is quite simple."

I can not tell whether the power of my old recollections is still upon me, but I confess that even at this moment I can hardly believe that when Bonaparte spoke thus he was not sincere. I have watched each stage of progress in the art of

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dissimulation, and I know that at that particular epoch he still retained certain accents of truthfulness, which afterward were no longer to be detected in his voice. Perhaps, however, it was only that at that time I still believed in him.

With the above words he left us, and Mme. Bonaparte told me that he remained up almost the whole of the night, debating whether or not he should have Moreau arrested, weighing the pros and cons of the measure, without any symptom of personal feeling in the matter; that then, toward daybreak, he sent for General Berthier, and after a long interview with him he determined on sending to Grosbois, whither Moreau had retired.

This event gave rise to a great deal of discussion, and opinion was much divided. General Moreau's brother, a tribune, spoke with great vehemence at the Tribunate, and produced considerable effect. A deputation was sent up by the three representative bodies with an address of congratulation to the First Consul. In Paris, all who represented the liberal portion of the population, a section of the *bourgeoisie*, lawyers, and men of letters, were warmly in favor of Moreau. It was, of course, plain enough that political opposition formed an element in the interest exhibited on his behalf; his partisans agreed that they would throng the court at which he was to be brought up, and there was even a threatening whisper about what should be done if he were condemned. Bonaparte's police informed him that there was a plot to break into Moreau's prison. This irritated him, and his calmness began to give way. Murat, his brother-in-law, who was then Governor of Paris, hated Moreau, and took care to add to Bonaparte's exasperation by his daily reports to him, he and Dubois, the Prefect of Police, combining together to pursue him with alarming rumors. Events, unhappily, came to the aid of their design. Each day a fresh ramification of the conspiracy was discovered, and each day Parisian society refused more obstinately than on the preceding to believe

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that there was any conspiracy at all. A war of opinion was being waged between Bonaparte and the Parisians.

On the 29th of February Pichegru's hiding-place was discovered, and he was arrested, after a gallant struggle with the gendarmes. This event somewhat shook the general incredulity, but public interest still centered in Moreau. His wife's grief assumed a rather theatrical aspect, and this also had its effect. In the mean time Bonaparte, who was ignorant of the formalities of law, found them much more tedious than he had expected. At the commencement of the affair, the Chief Judge had too readily undertaken to simplify and shorten the procedure, and now only one charge was distinctly made: that Moreau had held secret conferences with Pichegru, and had received his confidence, but without pledging himself positively to anything. This was not sufficient to secure a condemnation, which was becoming a necessity. In short, notwithstanding that great name which is mixed up in the affair, Georges Cadoudal has always been believed to have been, as at the trial he appeared to be, the real leader of the conspiracy.

It would be impossible to describe the excitement that pervaded the palace. Everybody was consulted; the most trifling conversations were repeated. One day Savary took M. de Rémusat aside, and said, "You have been a magistrate, you know the laws; do you think the details of this affair that we are in possession of are sufficient for the information of the judges?" "No man," replied my husband, "has ever been condemned merely because he did not reveal projects with which he was made acquainted. No doubt that is a political wrong with respect to the Government, but it is not a crime which ought to involve the penalty of death; and, if that is your sole plea, you will only have furnished Moreau with evidence damaging to yourselves." "In that case," said Savary, "the Chief Judge has led us into making a great blunder. It would have been better to have had a military commission."

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From the day of Pichegru's arrest, the gates of Paris were shut, while search was made for Georges Cadoudal, who eluded pursuit with extraordinary success. Fouché, who laid the foundations of his new reputation on this occasion, mercilessly ridiculed the unskillfulness of the police, and his comments enraged Bonaparte, who was already angry enough; so that, when he had incurred a real danger, and saw that the Parisians were disinclined to believe the statement of the facts, he began to wish for revenge. "Judge," said he, "whether the French can ever be governed by legal and moderate institutions? I have put down a revolutionary but useful department of the ministry, and conspiracies are immediately formed. I have foregone my own personal feelings; I have handed over the punishment of a man who intended to kill me to an authority independent of myself; and, far from giving me any thanks for all this, people laugh at my moderation, and assign corrupt motives to my conduct. I will teach them to belie my intentions. I will lay hold of all my powers again, and prove to them that I alone am made to govern, to decide, and to punish."

Bonaparte grew more and more angry as he became aware, from moment to moment, that something was amiss with himself. He had thought to rule public opinion, but here was public opinion escaping from his hold. He had been ruled himself by it in the outset of his career, I am certain, and he had gained no credit by that; so he resolved that never again would he be so mistaken. It will seem strange, to those who do not know how utterly the wearing of a uniform destroys the habit of thinking, that not the slightest uneasiness was felt on this occasion with respect to the army. Military men do everything by word of command, and they abstain from opinions which are not prescribed to them. Very few officers remembered then that they had fought and conquered under Moreau, and the *bourgeoisie* was much more excited about the affair than any other class.

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The Polignacs, M. de Rivière, and some others were arrested. Then the public began to think there really was some truth in the story of the conspiracy, and that the plot was a Royalist one. Nevertheless, the Republican party still demanded Moreau. The nobility were alarmed and kept very quiet; they condemned the imprudence of the Polignacs, who have since acknowledged that they were not seconded with so much zeal as they had been led to expect. The error into which they fell, and to which the Royalist party was always prone, was that they believed in the existence of what they desired, and acted upon their illusions. This is a mistake common to men who are led by their passions or by their vanity.

I suffered a great deal at this time. At the Tuileries the First Consul was moody and silent, his wife was frequently in tears, his family were angry; his sister exasperated him by her violent way of talking. In society opinions were divided: on the one hand were distrust, suspicion, indignant satisfaction; on the other, regret that the attempt had failed and passionate condemnation. All these contentions distracted and upset me. I shut myself up with my mother and my husband; we questioned one another about all that we heard and everything that we respectively thought. M. de Rémusat's steady rectitude of mind was grieved by the errors which were perpetrated; and, as his judgment was quite uninfluenced by passion, he began to dread the future, and imparted to me his sagacious and melancholy prevision of a character which he studied closely and silently. His apprehensions distressed me; the doubts which were springing up in my own mind rendered me very unhappy. Alas! the moment was drawing near when I was to be far more painfully enlightened.

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CHAPTER V.

The Arrest of Georges Cadoudal—The Mission of M. de Caulaincourt to Ettenheim—The Arrest of the Duc d'Enghien—My Distress and my Urgency with Mme. Bonaparte—An Evening at Malmaison—The Death of the Duc d'Enghien—Remarkable Words of the First Consul.

After the arrests which I have already recorded, there appeared in the "Moniteur" certain articles from the "Morning Chronicle," in which it was stated that the death of Bonaparte and the restoration of Louis XVIII. were imminent. It was added that persons newly arrived from London affirmed that speculation upon these eventualities was rife on the Stock Exchange, and that Georges Cadoudal, Pichegru, and Moreau were named openly there. In the same "Moniteur" appeared a letter from an Englishman to Bonaparte, whom he addressed as "Monsieur Consul." The purport of this letter was to recommend, as specially applicable to Bonaparte, a pamphlet written in Cromwell's time, which tended to prove that persons such as Cromwell and himself could not be assassinated, because there was no crime in killing a dangerous animal or a tyrant. "To kill is not to assassinate in such cases," said the pamphlet; "the difference is great."

In France, however, addresses from all the towns and from all the regiments, and pastorals by all the Bishops, complimenting the First Consul and congratulating France on the danger which had been escaped, were forwarded to Paris; and these documents were punctually inserted in the "Moniteur."

At length, on the 29th of March, Georges Cadoudal was

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arrested in the Place de l'Odéon. He was in a cabriolet, and, perceiving that he was followed, he urged on his horse. A gendarme bravely caught the animal by the head, and was shot dead by Cadoudal; the cabriolet was, however, stopped, owing to the crowd which instantly collected at the noise of the pistol-shot, and Cadoudal was seized. Between sixty thousand and eighty thousand francs in notes were found on him, and given to the widow of the man whom he had killed. The newspapers stated that he acknowledged he had come to France for no other purpose than to assassinate Bonaparte; but I remember to have heard at the time that the prisoner, whose courage and firmness during the whole of the proceedings were unshaken, and who evinced great devotion to the house of Bourbon, steadily denied that there had ever been any purpose of assassination, while admitting that his intentions had been to attack the carriage of the First Consul, and to carry him off without harming him.

At this time the King of England (George III.) was taken seriously ill, and our Government reckoned upon his death to insure the retirement of Mr. Pitt from the ministry.

On the 21st of March the following appeared in the "Moniteur": "Prince de Condé has addressed a circular to the *émigrés*, with a view to collecting them on the Rhine. A prince of the house of Bourbon is now on the frontier for that purpose."

Immediately afterward the secret correspondence that had been taken from Mr. Drake, the accredited English Minister in Bavaria, was published. These proved that the English Government was leaving no means untried of creating disturbance in France. M. de Talleyrand was directed to send copies of this correspondence to all the members of the Corps Diplomatique, and they expressed their indignation in letters which were inserted in the "Moniteur."

Holy Week was approaching. On Passion Sunday, the 18th of March, my week of attendance on Mme. Bonaparte began. I went to the Tuileries in the morning, in time for

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mass, which was again celebrated with all the former pomp. After mass, Mme. Bonaparte received company in the great drawing-room, and remained for some time, talking to several persons. When we went down to her private apartments, she informed me that we were to pass that week at Malmaison. "I am very glad," she added; "Paris frightens me just now." Shortly afterward we set out; Bonaparte was in his own carriage, Mme. Bonaparte and myself in hers. I observed that she was very silent and sad for a part of the way, and I let her see that I was uneasy about her. At first she seemed reluctant to give me any explanation, but at length she said, "I am going to trust you with a great secret. This morning Bonaparte told me that he had sent M. de Caulaincourt to the frontier to seize the Duc d'Enghien. He is to be brought back here." "Ah, madame," I exclaimed, "what are they going to do with him?" "I believe," she answered, "he will have him tried." I do not think I have ever in my life experienced such a thrill of terror as that which her words sent through me. Mme. Bonaparte thought I was going to faint, and let down all the glasses. "I have done what I could," she went on, "to induce him to promise me that the prince's life shall not be taken, but I am greatly afraid his mind is made up." "What, do you really think he will have him put to death?" "I fear so." At these words I burst into tears, and then, so soon as I could master my emotion sufficiently to be able to speak, I urged upon her the fatal consequences of such a deed, the indelible stain of the royal blood, whose shedding would satisfy the Jacobin party only, the strong interest with which the prince inspired all the other parties, the great name of Condé, the general horror, the bitter animosity which would be aroused, and many other considerations. I urged every side of the question, of which Mme. Bonaparte contemplated one only. The idea of a murder was that which had struck her most strongly; but I succeeded in seriously alarming her, and she promised me that she would

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endeavor by every means in her power to induce Bonaparte to relinquish his fatal purpose.

We both arrived at Malmaison in the deepest dejection. I took refuge at once in my own room, where I wept bitterly. I was completely overwhelmed by this terrible discovery. I liked and admired Bonaparte; I believed him to be called by an invincible power to the highest of human destinies; I allowed my youthful imagination to run riot concerning him. All in a moment, the veil which hid the truth from my eyes was torn away, and by my own feelings at that instant I could only too accurately divine what would be the general opinion of such an act.

There was no one at Malmaison to whom I could speak freely. My husband was not in waiting, and had remained in Paris. I was obliged to control my agitation, and to make my appearance with an unmoved countenance; for Mme. Bonaparte had earnestly entreated me not to let Bonaparte divine that she had spoken to me of this matter.

On going down to the drawing-room at six o'clock, I found the First Consul playing a game of chess. He appeared quite serene and calm; it made me ill to look at his face. So completely had my mind been upset by all that had passed through it during the last two hours, that I could not regard him with the feelings which his presence usually inspired; it seemed to me that I must see some extraordinary alteration in him. A few officers dined with him. Nothing whatever of any significance occurred. After dinner he withdrew to his cabinet, where he transacted business with his police. That night, when I was leaving Mme. Bonaparte, she again promised me that she would renew her entreaties.

I joined her as early as I could on the following morning, and found her quite in despair. Bonaparte had repelled her at every point. He had told her that women had no concern with such matters; that his policy required this *coup d'état*; that by it he should acquire the right to exercise clemency

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hereafter; that, in fact, he was forced to choose between this decisive act and a long series of conspiracies which he would have to punish in detail, as impunity would have encouraged the various parties. He should have to go on prosecuting, exiling, condemning, without end; to revoke his measures of mercy toward the *émigrés;* to place himself in the hands of the Jacobins. The Royalists had more than once compromised him with the revolutionists. The contemplated action would set him free from all parties alike. Besides, the Duc d'Enghien, after all, had joined in the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal; he was a cause of disturbance to France, and a tool in the hands of England for effecting her purposes of vengeance. The prince's military reputation might in the future prove a source of trouble in the army; whereas by his death the last link between our soldiers and the Bourbons would be broken. In politics, a death which tranquillizes a nation is not a crime. Finally, he had given his orders—he would not withdraw them; there was an end of the matter.

During this interview, Mme. Bonaparte informed her husband that he was about to aggravate the heinousness of the deed by the selection of M. de Caulaincourt, whose parents had formerly been in the household of the Prince de Condé, as the person who was to arrest the Duc d'Enghien. "I did not know that," replied Bonaparte; "but what does it matter? If Caulaincourt is compromised, there is no great harm in that; indeed, it will only make him serve me all the better, and the opposite party will henceforth forgive him for being a gentleman." He then added that M. de Caulaincourt, who had been informed of only a portion of his plan, believed that the Duc d'Enghien was to be imprisoned in France.

My heart failed me at these words. M. de Caulaincourt was a friend of mine. It seemed to me that he ought to have refused to undertake such a task as that which had been imposed upon him.

The day passed drearily. I remember that Mme. Bona-

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parte, who was very fond of trees and flowers, was busy during the morning superintending the transplanting of a cypress to a newly laid-out portion of her garden. She threw a few handfuls of earth on the roots of the tree, so that she might say that she had planted it with her own hands. "Ah, madame," said I to her, as I observed her doing so, "a cypress is just the tree to suit such a day as this." I have never passed by that cypress since without a thrill of pain.

My profound emotion distressed Mme. Bonaparte. She had great faith in all Bonaparte's views, and, owing to her natural levity and fickleness, she excessively disliked painful or lasting impressions. Her feelings were quick, but extraordinarily evanescent. Being convinced that the death of the Duc d'Enghien was inevitable, she wanted to get rid of an unavailing regret; but I would not allow her to do so. I importuned her all day long, without ceasing. She listened to me with extreme gentleness and kindness, but in utter dejection; she knew Bonaparte better than I. I wept while talking to her; I implored her not to allow herself to be put down, and, as I was not without influence over her, I succeeded in inducing her to make a last attempt.

"Mention me to the First Consul, if necessary," said I. "I am of very little importance, but at least he will be able to judge of the impression he is about to make by the effect upon me, and I am more attached to him than other people are. I, who would ask nothing better than to find excuses for him, can not see even one for what he intends to do."

We saw very little of Bonaparte during the whole of that second day. The Chief Judge, the Prefect of Police, and Murat all came to Malmaison, and had prolonged audience of the First Consul; I augured ill from their countenances. I remained up a great part of the night; and when at length I fell asleep my dreams were frightful. I fancied that I heard constant movements in the château, and that a fresh attempt was about to be made upon our lives. I was possessed with a strong desire to go and throw myself at Bona-

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parte's feet, and implore him to take pity upon his own fame, which I then believed to be very pure and bright, and I grieved heartily over the tarnishing of it. The hours of that night can never be effaced from my memory.

On the Tuesday morning Mme. Bonaparte said to me, "All is useless. The Duc d'Enghien arrives this evening. He will be taken to Vincennes and tried to-night. Murat has undertaken the whole. He is odious in this matter; it is he who is urging Bonaparte on, by telling him that his clemency will be taken for weakness, that the Jacobins will be furious, and one party is now displeased because the former fame of Moreau has not been taken into consideration, and will ask why a Bourbon should be differently treated. Bonaparte has forbidden me to speak to him again on the subject. He asked me about you," she added, "and I acknowledged that I had told you everything. He had perceived your distress. Pray try to control yourself."

At this I lost all self-restraint, and exclaimed, "Let him think what he likes of me. It matters very little to me, madame, I assure you; and if he asks me why I am weeping, I will tell him that I weep for him." And, in fact, I again burst into tears.

Mme. Bonaparte was thrown into utter consternation by the state I was in—she was almost a stranger to any strong mental emotion; and when she tried to calm me by reassuring words I could only say to her, "Ah, madame, you do not understand me!" After this event, she said, Bonaparte would go on just as he had done before. Alas! it was not the future which was troubling me. I did not doubt his power over himself and others. The anguish that filled my whole being was interior and personal.

Dinner hour came, and she had to go down with a composed face. Mine was quite beyond my control. Again Bonaparte was playing chess: he had taken a fancy to that game. Immediately on perceiving me he called me to him, saying that he wanted to consult me. I was not able to speak. He

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addressed me in a tone of kindness and interest, which increased my confusion and distress. When dinner was served, he placed me near himself, and asked me a number of questions about the affairs of my family. He seemed bent on bewildering me, and hindering me from thinking. Little Napoleon (the son of Louis and Hortense) had been brought down from Paris; and his uncle placed the child in the middle of the table, and seemed much amused when he pulled the dishes about, and upset everything within his reach.

After dinner he sat on the floor, playing with the boy, and apparently in very high spirits, but, it seemed to me, assumed. Mme. Bonaparte, who was afraid that he would have been angry at what she had told him about me, looked from him to me, smiling sweetly, as if she would have said, "You see, he is not so bad after all; we may make our minds easy."

I hardly knew where I was. I felt as though I were dreaming a bad dream; no doubt I looked bewildered. Suddenly, fixing a piercing gaze on me, Bonaparte said, "Why have you no rouge on? You are too pale." I answered that I had forgotten to put on any. "What!" said he, "a woman forget to put on her rouge?" And then, with a loud laugh, he turned to his wife and added, "That would never happen to you, Josephine." I was greatly disconcerted, and he completed my discomfiture by remarking, "Two things are very becoming to women—rouge and tears."

When General Bonaparte was in high spirits, he was equally devoid of taste and moderation, and on such occasions his manners smacked of the barrack-room. He went on for some time jesting with his wife with more freedom than delicacy, and then challenged me to a game of chess. He did not play well, and never would observe the correct "moves." I allowed him to do as he liked; every one in the room kept silence. Presently he began to mutter some lines of poetry, and then repeated a little louder, "Soyons ami, Cinna," and Guzman's lines in Act v. Scene vii. of "Alzire":

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"Des dieux que nous servons connais la différence:
Les tiens t'ont commandé le meurtre et la vengeance:
Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner,
M'ordonne de te plaindre et de te pardonner."

As he half whispered the line,

"Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner,"

I could not refrain from raising my eyes and looking at him. He smiled, and went on repeating the verses. In truth, at that moment I did believe that he had deceived his wife and everybody else, and was planning a grand scene of magnanimous pardon. I caught eagerly at this idea, and it restored me to composure. My imagination was very juvenile in those days, and I longed so much to be able to hope!

"You like poetry?" Bonaparte asked me. How I longed to answer, "Especially when the lines are applicable"; but I did not dare to utter the words. I may as well mention in this place that the very day after I had set down the above reminiscence, a friend lent me a book entitled "Mémoires Secrètes sur la Vie de Lucien Bonaparte." This work, which is probably written by a secretary of Lucien's, is inaccurate in several instances. Some notes added at the end are said to be written by a person worthy of belief. I found among them the following, which struck me as curious: "Lucien was informed of the death of the Duc d'Enghien by General Hullin, a relative of Mme. Jouberthon, who came to her house some hours after that event, looking the image of grief and consternation. The Military Council had been assured that the First Consul only purposed to assert his authority, and fully intended to pardon the prince, and certain lines from 'Alzire,' commencing

'Des dieux que nous servons connais la différence,'

had been quoted to them."

But to resume. We went on with our game, and his gayety gave me more and more confidence. We were still

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playing when the sound of carriage-wheels was heard, and presently General Hullin was announced. Bonaparte pushed away the chess-table roughly, rose, and went into the adjoining gallery. There he remained all the rest of the evening, with Murat, Hullin, and Savary. We saw no more of him, and yet I went to my room feeling more easy. I could not believe but that Bonaparte must be moved by the fact of having such a victim in his hands. I hoped the prince would ask to see him; and in fact he did so, adding, "If the First Consul would consent to see me, he would do me justice, for he would know that I have done my duty." My idea was that Bonaparte would go to Vincennes, and publicly grant the prince pardon in person. If he were not going to act thus, why should he have quoted those lines from "Alzire"?

That night, that terrible night, passed. Early in the morning I went down to the drawing-room, and there I found Savary. He was deadly pale, and I must do him the justice to say that his face betrayed great agitation. He spoke to me with trembling lips, but his words were quite insignificant. I did not question him; for persons of his kind will always say what they want to say without being asked, although they never give answers.

Mme. Bonaparte came in, looked at me very sadly, and, as she took her seat, said to Savary, "Well—so it is done?" "Yes, madame," he answered. "He died this morning, and, I am bound to acknowledge, with great courage." I was struck dumb with horror.

Mme. Bonaparte asked for details. They have all been made known since. The prince was taken to one of the trenches of the chateau. Being offered a handkerchief to bind his eyes with, he rejected it with dignity, and, addressing the gendarmes, said, "You are Frenchmen: at least you will do me the service not to miss your aim." He placed in Savary's hands a ring, a lock of hair, and a letter for Mme. de Rohan; and all these Savary showed to Mme. Bonaparte. The letter was open; it was brief and tender. I do not

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know whether these last wishes of the unfortunate prince were carried out.

"After his death," said Savary, "the gendarmes were told that they might take his clothes, his watch, and the money he had in his pocket; but not one of them would touch anything. People may say what they like, but one can not see a man like that die as coolly as one can see others. I feel it hard to get over it."

Presently Eugène de Beauharnais made his appearance. He was too young to have recollections of the past, and in his eyes the Duc d'Enghien was simply a conspirator against the life of his master. Then came certain generals, whose names I will not set down here; and they approved of the deed so loudly that Mme. Bonaparte thought it necessary to apologize for her own dejection, by repeating over and over again the unmeaning sentence, "I am a woman, you know, and I confess I could cry."

In the course of the morning a number of visitors came to the Tuileries. Among them were the Consuls, the Ministers, and Louis Bonaparte and his wife. Louis preserved a sullen silence, which seemed to imply disapprobation. Mme. Louis was so frightened that she did not dare to feel, and seemed to be asking what she ought to think. Women, even more than men, were subjugated by the magic of that sacramental phrase of Bonaparte's—"My policy." With those words he crushed one's thoughts, feelings, and even impressions; and, when he uttered them, no one in the palace, especially no woman, would have dared to ask him what he meant.

My husband also came during the morning, and his presence relieved me from the terrible oppression from which I was suffering. He, like myself, was grieved and downcast. How grateful I was to him for not lecturing me upon the absolute necessity of our appearing perfectly composed under the circumstances! We sympathized in every feeling. He told me that the general sentiment in Paris was one of dis-

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gust, and that the heads of the Jacobin party said, "He belongs to us now." He added the following words, which I have frequently recalled to mind since: "The Consul has taken a line which will force him into laying aside the useful, in order to efface this recollection, and into dazzling us by the extraordinary and the unexpected." He also said to Mme. Bonaparte: "There is one important piece of advice which you ought to give the First Consul. It is that he should not lose a moment in restoring public confidence. Opinion is apt to be precipitate in Paris. He ought at least to prove to the people that the event which has just occurred is not due to the development of a cruel disposition, but to reasons whose force I am not called upon to determine, and which ought to make him very circumspect."

Mme. Bonaparte fully appreciated the advice of M. de Rémusat, and immediately repeated his words to her husband. He seemed well disposed to listen to her, and answered briefly, "That is quite true." On rejoining Mme. Bonaparte before dinner, I found her in the gallery, with her daughter and M. de Caulaincourt, who had just arrived. He had superintended the arrest of the prince, but had not accompanied him to Paris. I recoiled at the sight of him. "And you, too," said he, addressing me, so that all could hear him, "you are going to detest me! And yet I am only unfortunate; but that I am in no small degree, for the Consul has disgraced me by this act. Such is the reward of my devotion to him. I have been shamefully deceived, and I am now ruined." He shed tears while speaking, and I could not but pity him.

Mme. Bonaparte assured me afterward that he had spoken in the same way to the First Consul, and I was myself a witness to his maintenance of a severe and angry bearing toward Bonaparte, who made many advances to him, but for a long time in vain. The First Consul laid out his plans before him, but found him cold and uninterested; then he made him brilliant offers, by way of amends, which were at first

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rejected. Perhaps they ought to have been always refused.

In the mean time public opinion declared itself strongly against M. de Caulaincourt. Certain persons condemned the aide-de-camp mercilessly, while they made excuses for the master; and such injustice exasperated M. de Caulaincourt, who might have bowed his head before frank and candid censure, fairly distributed between them. When, however, he saw that every sort of affront was to be heaped on him, in order that the real culprit might go quite free, he conceived an utter disdain for these people, and consented to force them into silence by placing himself in a position of such authority as would enable him to overrule them. He was urged to take this course by Bonaparte, and also by his own ambition. "Do not act like a fool," said the former. "If you retreat before the blows which are aimed at you, you will be done for; no one will give you any thanks or credit for your tardy opposition to my wishes, and you will be all the more heavily censured because you are not formidable." By dint of similar reasoning frequently reiterated, and by the employment of every sort of device for consoling and coaxing M. de Caulaincourt, Bonaparte succeeded in appeasing his resentment, and by degrees he raised him to posts of great dignity about his own person. The weakness which induced M. de Caulaincourt to pardon the indelible injury which the First Consul had done him may be more or less blamed; but, at least, it should be admitted that he was never a blind or servile courtier, and that he remained to the last among the small number of Bonaparte's servants who never neglected an opportunity of telling him the truth.*

* M. de Caulaincourt retained the same feelings all his life, and very severely condemned the policy and the personal character of Bonaparte, whose fatal projects he frequently endeavored to avert. M. Monnier, the son of the celebrated member of the Assemblies of the Revolution, with whom my father was very intimate in his youth, told him that in the campaign of 1813 M. de Caulaincourt, then Duc de Vienne, while accompanying the Emperor with several members of his staff and of his household, saw a shell strike the ground close by Napoleon.

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Before dinner, both Mme. Bonaparte and her daughter entreated me to command my countenance as much as possible. The former told me that her husband had asked her that morning what effect the deplorable news had produced upon me; and on her replying that I had wept, he said, "That is a matter of course; she merely did what was to be expected of her as a woman. You don't understand anything about our business; but it will all subside and everybody will see that I have not made a blunder."

At length dinner was announced. In addition to the household officers on duty for that week, the dinner-party included M. and Mme. Louis Bonaparte, Eugène Beauharnais, M. de Caulaincourt, and General Hullin, who was then Commandant of Paris. The sight of this man affected me painfully. His expression of face, perfectly unmoved, was just the same on that day as it had been on the preceding.* I quite believe that he did not think he had done an ill deed, or that he had performed an act of zeal in presiding over the military commission which condemned the prince. Bonaparte rewarded the fatal service which he had rendered him with money and promotion, but he said more than once, when he noted Hullin's presence, "The sight of him annoys me; he reminds me of things which I do not like."

Bonaparte did not come into the drawing-room at all; he went from his cabinet to the dinner-table. He affected no high spirits that day; on the contrary, he remained during the whole time of dinner in a profound reverie. We were all very silent. Just as we were about to rise from table, the First Consul said, in a harsh, abrupt tone, as if in reply to

He rode up, putting his horse between the Emperor and the missile, and covered him as much as possible from the fragments of the shell, which happily exploded without hitting anybody. In the evening, M. Monnier, who was supping at headquarters, spoke to him of this deed of bravery, by which he had risked his own life to save that of his master. "That is true," replied the Duc de Vienne, "and yet I could not believe that there is a God in heaven if that man were to die on the throne."

* I have since been assured that he was deeply grieved.

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his own thoughts, "At least they will see what we are capable of, and henceforth, I hope, they will leave us alone." He then passed on into the drawing-room, where he talked for a long time in a low voice with his wife, looking at me now and then, but without any anger in his glance. I sat apart from all, downcast and ill, without either the power or the wish to utter a word.

Presently Joseph Bonaparte and M. and Mme. Bacciochi * arrived, accompanied by M. de Fontanes.† Lucien was on bad terms with his brother, who had objected to his marriage with Mme. Jouberthon, and came no more to the palace; indeed, he was then making ready to leave France. During the evening, Murat, Dubois, who was Prefect of Police, the members of the Council of the State, and others arrived, all with composed faces. The conversation was at first trifling and awkward: the women sitting silent, the men standing in a semicircle, Bonaparte walking about from one side of the room to the other. Presently he began a discussion, half literary, half historical, with M. de Fontanes. The mention of certain names which belong to history gave him an opportunity of bringing out his opinion of some of our kings and great military commanders. I remarked on this evening that he dwelt on dethronements of every kind, both actual and such as are effected by a change of mind. He lauded Charlemagne, but maintained that France had always been *en décadence* under the Valois. He depreciated the greatness of Henry IV. "He was wanting," said he, "in gravity. Good nature is an affectation which a sovereign ought to avoid. What does he want? Is it to remind those who surround him that he is a man like any other? What nonsense! So soon as a man is a king he is apart from all, and I have always held that the instinct of true policy was in

* M. Bacciochi was then a colonel of dragoons, and had nothing whatever to do with politics. He had a passion for the violin, and played all day.

† M. de Fontanes was appointed President of the Corps Législatif at this time, and afterward perpetual President.

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Alexander's idea of making himself out to be the descendant of a god." He added that Louis XIV. knew the French better than Henry IV.; but he hastened to add that Louis had allowed "priests and an old woman" to get the better of him, and he made some coarse remarks on that point. Then he held forth on Louis XIV.'s generals, and on military science in general.

"Military science," said Bonaparte, "consists in calculating all the chances accurately in the first place, and then in giving accident exactly, almost mathematically, its place in one's calculations. It is upon this point that one must not deceive one's self, and that a decimal more or less may change all. Now, this apportioning of accident and science can not get into any head except that of a genius, for genius must exist wherever there is a creation; and assuredly the grandest improvisation of the human mind is the gift of an existence to that which has it not. Accident, hazard, chance, whatever you choose to call it, a mystery to ordinary minds, becomes a reality to superior men. Turenne did not think about it, and so he had nothing but method. I think," he added with a smile, "I should have beaten him. Condé had a better notion of it than Turenne, but then he gave himself up to it with impetuosity. Prince Eugene is one of those who understood it best. Henry IV. always put bravery in the place of everything; he only fought actions—he would not have come well out of a pitched battle. Catinat has been cried up chiefly from the democratic point of view; I have, for my own part, carried off a victory on the spot where he was beaten. The philosophers have worked up his reputation after their own fancy, and that was all the easier to do, because one may say anything one likes about ordinary people who have been lifted into eminence by circumstances not of their own creating. A man, to be really great, no matter in what order of greatness, must have actually improvised a portion of his own glory—must have shown himself superior to the event which he has brought about. For

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instance, Cæsar acted now and then with weakness, which makes me suspect the praises that are lavished on him in history.

"I am rather doubtful of your friends the historians, M. de Fontanes. Even your Tacitus himself explains nothing; he arrives at certain results without indicating the routes that have been followed. He is, I think, able as a writer, but hardly so as a statesman. He depicts Nero as an execrable tyrant, and then he tells us, almost in the same page with a description of the pleasure he felt in burning down Rome, that the people loved him. All that is not plain and clear. Believe me, we are sometimes the dupes of our beliefs—of writers who have fabricated history for us in accordance with the natural bent of their own minds. But do you know whose history I should like to read, if it were well written? That of King Frederick II. of Prussia. I hold him to be one of those who has best understood his business in every sort of way. These ladies"—here he turned to us—"will not be of my opinion; they will say that he was harsh and selfish. But, after all, is a great statesman made for feeling? Is he not a completely eccentric personage, who stands always alone, on his own side, with the world on the other? The glass through which he looks is that of his policy; his sole concern ought to be that it should neither magnify nor diminish. And, while he observes objects with attention, he must also be careful to hold the reins equally; for the chariot which he drives is often drawn by ill-matched horses. How, then, is he to occupy himself with those fine distinctions of feelings which are important to the generality of mankind? Can he consider the affections, the ties of kinship, the puerile arrangements of society? In such a position as his, how many actions are regarded separately, and condemned, although they are to contribute as a whole to that great work which the public does not discern? One day, those deeds will terminate the creation of the Colossus which will be the wonder of posterity. And you, mistaken as you are—you

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will withhold your praises, because you are afraid lest the movement of that great machine should crush you, as Gulliver crushed the Lilliputians when he moved his legs. Be advised; go on in advance of the time, enlarge your imagination, look out afar, and you will see that those great personages whom you think violent and cruel are only politic. They know themselves better, they judge themselves more correctly than you do; and, when they are really able men, they know how to master their passions, for they even calculate the effects of them."

From this, which was a kind of manifesto, the opinions of Bonaparte may be gathered, and also a notion of the rapid succession in which his ideas followed each other when he allowed himself to talk. It sometimes happened that his discourse would be less consecutive, for he put up well enough with interruptions; but on the day in question every one seemed to be benumbed in his presence; no one ventured to take up certain applications of his words, which it was evident he intended. He had never ceased walking to and fro while he was talking, and this for more than an hour. Many other things which he said have escaped my memory. At length, abruptly breaking off the chain of his ideas, he directed M. de Fontanes to read aloud certain extracts from Drake's correspondence, which I have already mentioned, all relating to the conspiracy. When the reading of the extracts was concluded, "There are proofs here," said he, "that can not be disputed. These people wanted to throw France into confusion, and to destroy the Revolution by destroying me; it was my duty both to defend and to avenge the Revolution. I have proved of what it is capable. The Duc d'Enghien was a conspirator like any other, and he had to be treated as such. The whole affair, moreover, was arranged without caution or accurate knowledge of the ground, on the faith of some obscure correspondence; a few credulous old women wrote letters, and were believed. The Bourbons will never see anything except through the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and they are

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fated to be perpetually deluded. The Polignacs made sure that every house in Paris would be open to them; and, when they arrived here, not a single noble would receive them. If all these fools were to kill me, they would not get their own way; they would only put angry Jacobins in my place. The day of etiquette is over, but the Bourbons can not give it up. If ever you see them return, mark my words that it will be the first subject that will occupy their minds. Ah! it would have been another story could they have been seen, like Henry IV., covered with dust and blood on a battle-field. A kingdom is not got back by dating a letter from London, and signing it 'Louis.' Nevertheless, such a letter compromises imprudent people, and I am obliged to punish them, although I feel a sort of pity for them. I have shed blood; it was necessary to do so. I may have to shed more, but not out of anger—simply because blood-letting is one of the remedies in political medicine. I am the man of the State; I am the French Revolution. I say it, and I will uphold it."

After this last declaration, Bonaparte dismissed us all. We dispersed without daring to interchange our ideas, and thus ended this fatal day.*

* The murder of the Duc d'Enghien is an inexhaustible subject of controversy between the opponents of the Empire and the supporters of Napoleon. In the most recent and important works of historians and memoir-writers, there is nothing to contradict the above narrative, which possesses, moreover, every mark of sincerity and truthfulness. The First Consul originated and ordered the crime; Savary and the military commission executed it; M. de Caulaincourt was the unconscious medium. A full account of the trial may be found in a work entitled "Le Duc d'Enghien d'après les Documents Historiques," par L. Constant, 8vo, Paris, 1869. The following extract from Chateaubriand's "Mémoires d'Outre-tombe" will, I think, be of interest at this point, although the work does not rank among the best productions of its author, and can not be absolutely relied on. Nevertheless, M. de Chateaubriand's resignation of his post on the day following the crime is justly held honorable to him. "A council was held on the proposed arrest of the Duc d'Enghien. Cambacérès, in his unpublished Memoirs, asserts—and I believe him—that he opposed the arrest; but, although he records his own words, he does not say what replies they elicited. The 'Mémorial de Ste. Hélène' denies, however, that Bonaparte had to

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refuse any entreaties for clemency. The imaginary scene in which Josephine begs on her knees for the life of the Duc d'Enghien, and, clinging to the coat of Napoleon, is dragged along the ground by her inexorable husband, is one of those melodramatic inventions with which the fiction-writers of the present day compose their veracious histories. On the evening of March 19th Josephine was in ignorance that the Duc d'Enghien was to be tried; she only knew that he had been arrested. She had promised Mme. de Rémusat to interest herself in his fate. . . . On March 21st, Bonaparte said to his wife, 'The Duc d'Enghien has been shot.' The Memoirs of Mme. de Rémusat, with whom I was acquainted, were full of exceedingly curious details of the private life of the Imperial Court. Their author burned them during the Hundred Days, but afterward rewrote them. They are now but recollections of former recollections; the colors are faded; but Bonaparte is always clearly depicted and impartially judged."—P. R.

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CHAPTER VI.

(1804.)

The Impression produced in Paris by the Death of the Duc d'Enghien—The First Consul's Efforts to dispel it—Performance at the Opera House—Death of Pichegru—Breach between Bonaparte and his Brother Lucien—Project of adopting the young Napoleon—Foundation of the Empire.

The First Consul spared no pains to allay the excitement which was caused by this event. He perceived that his conduct had raised the question of his real character, and he set himself to prove, both by his speeches in the Council of State, and also to all of us, that political considerations only, and not passion of any kind, had led to the death of the Duc d'Enghien. As I said before, he made no attempt to check the genuine indignation evinced by M. de Caulaincourt, and toward me he displayed indulgence which once more unsettled my opinions. How strong a power of persuasion do sovereigns, whatever their character, exercise over us! Our feelings, and, to be frank, our vanity also, run to meet their slightest advances half-way. I grieved, but I felt myself being slowly won over by the adroitness of Bonaparte; and I cried

"Plut à Dieu ce fût le dernier de ses crimes!"

Meanwhile we returned to Paris, and then my feelings were again painfully excited by the state of opinion there. I could make no reply to what was said. I could only try to persuade those who believed that this fatal act was but the beginning of a blood-stained reign, that they were mistaken; and although it would be difficult, in point of fact, to ex-

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aggerate the impression that such a crime must produce, still party spirit ran so high that, although my own feelings revolted against it, I sometimes found myself endeavoring to offer some sort of excuse for it—uselessly enough, since I was addressing myself to people whose convictions were unalterable.

I had a warm discussion with Mme. de ——, a cousin of Mme. Bonaparte's. She was one of those persons who did not attend the evening receptions at the Tuileries, but who, having divided the palace into two separate regions, considered that they might appear in Mme. Bonaparte's apartment on the ground floor in the morning, without departing from their principles or sullying their reminiscences by recognition of the actual government on the first floor.

She was a clever, animated woman, with rather high-flown notions. Mme. Bonaparte was frightened by her vehement indignation; and, finding me with her one day, she attacked me with equal vigor, and compassionated both of us for being, as she said, bound in chains to a tyrant. She went so far that I tried to make her understand the distress she was inflicting on her cousin. Then she turned violently upon me, and accused me of not sufficiently appreciating the horror of the event that had just taken place. "As for me," she said, "every sense and every feeling is so outraged that, if your Consul were to come into this room, you would see me fly on the instant, as one flies from a venomous beast." "Ah, madame," I answered (little thinking that my words would prove prophetic), "refrain from expressions which at some future day may prove embarrassing to you. Weep with us, but reflect that the recollection of words uttered in a moment of excitement often complicates one's subsequent actions. To-day you are angry with me for my apparent moderation; yet, perhaps, my feelings will last longer than yours." And, in fact, a few months later, Mme. de —— became lady-in-waiting to her cousin, the newly made Empress.

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Hume says somewhere that Cromwell, having established a sort of phantom of royalty, very soon found himself surrounded by that particular class of nobles who conceive themselves called on to live in palaces so soon as their doors are reopened. The First Consul, on assuming the insignia of the power he already wielded, offered a salve to the conscience of the old nobility which vanity always readily applies; for who can resist the temptation of recovering the rank he feels himself made to adorn? I am about to draw a very homely comparison, but I believe a true one. In the nature of the *grand seigneur* there is something of the character of the cat, which remains faithful to the same house, no matter who may become the proprietor of it.

Bonaparte, stained with the blood of the Duc d'Enghien, but having become an Emperor, succeeded in obtaining from the French nobles that for which he would have vainly sought so long as he was only First Consul; and when, in later days, he maintained to one of his ministers that this murder was indeed a crime, but not a blunder—"for," he added, "the consequences that I foresaw have all exactly happened"—he was, in that sense, right.

And yet, if we look at things from a higher standpoint, the consequences of this act of his reached further than he thought for. He succeeded, doubtless, in moderating certain opinions, for there are numbers of people who give up feeling when there is nothing to hope; but, as M. de Rémusat said, the odium which the crime cast upon him obliged him to divert our thoughts from it by a succession of extraordinary feats, which would impose silence respecting the past. Moreover, he bound himself, as it were, to be always successful, for by success alone could he be justified. If we contemplate the tortuous and difficult path he was henceforth obliged to tread, we shall conclude that a noble and pure policy, based upon the prosperity of the human race and the free exercise of its rights, would have been then, as it is always, the best on which a sovereign can act.

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By the death of the Duc d'Enghien, Bonaparte succeeded in compromising, first ourselves, then the French nobility, finally the whole nation and all Europe. Our fate was united with his, it is true—this was a great point for him; but, when he dishonored us, he lost the right to that devotion and adherence which he claimed in vain when the hour of his ill fortune came. How could he reckon on a link forged, it must be owned, at the cost of the noblest feelings of the soul? Alas! I judge by my own case. From that time forward I began to blush in secret at the chain I wore; and this hidden feeling, which I stifled at different times with more or less success, afterward became the general sentiment.

On his return to Paris, the First Consul was struck by the effect he had produced. He perceived that feelings go more slowly than opinions, and that men's countenances wore a new expression in his presence. Weary of a remembrance that he would have liked to render a bygone from the very first, he thought the best plan was to let the people wear out their emotions as quickly as possible; and so he determined to appear in public, although certain persons advised him to defer doing so for a while. "But we must, at any cost," he answered, "throw that event into the past; and it will remain new so long as anything fresh is to be felt about it. If we change nothing in our habits, the public will soon regard the occurrence as an old affair." It was therefore arranged that he should go to the opera.

On that evening I was in attendance on Mme. Bonaparte; her carriage followed her husband's. His usual custom was not to wait for her, but to pass rapidly up the staircase and show himself in his box; on this occasion, however, he waited in the little ante-room adjoining it until Mme. Bonaparte arrived. She was trembling very much, and he was excessively pale; he looked round at us all, as if mutely asking us how we thought he would be received; and then he went forward at last like a man marching up to a battery.

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He was greeted in the usual way, either because the sight of him produced its customary effect—for the multitude do not change their habits in a moment—or because the police had taken measures of precaution beforehand. I had greatly feared he would not be applauded, and yet, when I saw that he was, my heart sank within me.

He remained only a few days in Paris; thence he removed to Saint Cloud, and I believe from that time forth he began to carry his projects of sovereignty into execution. He felt the necessity of imposing an authority which could no longer be contested upon Europe, and, at the very moment when he had just broken with all parties by deeds which he himself regarded as merely acts of vigor, he thought it well to reveal the goal toward which he had been advancing with more or less precaution. He began by obtaining from the Corps Législatif, now assembled, a levy of sixty thousand men; not that he wanted them for the war with England, which could only be carried on by sea, but because he required to assume an imposing attitude when about to astonish Europe by an altogether novel incident. The Code of Civil Laws had just been completed; this was an important work, and was said to be worthy of general approval. The halls wherein the three great bodies of the State assembled rang on this occasion with the praises of Bonaparte. M. Marcorelle, a deputy of the Corps Législatif, moved, amid loud acclamations, on the 24th of March, three days after the death of the Duc d'Enghien, that a bust of the First Consul should be placed in the Chamber of Deputies. "Let us," he said, "by a striking mark of our affection, proclaim to Europe that he who has been threatened by the daggers of vile assassins is the object of our attachment and admiration."

A few days later, Fourcroy, a member of the Council of State, closed the session in the name of the Government. He alluded to the princes of the house of Bourbon as "members of that unnatural family which would have drowned France in her own blood, so that they might reign over her," and

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added that they must be threatened with death if they ventured to pollute French territory by their presence.

Meanwhile, preparations for the great trial were going on; every day more Chouans were arrested, either in Brittany or in Paris, who were concerned in this conspiracy, and Georges Cadoudal, Pichegru, and Moreau had already been examined several times. The two first, it was said, answered with firmness; Moreau appeared to be much dejected. No clear information was obtained by these interrogatories.

One morning General Pichegru was found strangled in his prison. This event made a great sensation. It was unhesitatingly attributed to the need of getting rid of a formidable enemy. Pichegru's determination of character would, it was said, have led him, when the proceeding became public, to utter strong language, which would have had an undesirable effect. He would, perhaps, have created a party in his favor; he would have cleared Moreau, whose guilt it was already so difficult to prove. On the other hand, the partisans of Bonaparte said: "Nobody can doubt that Pichegru came to Paris in order to get up an insurrection. He himself does not deny it. His own avowals would have convinced the most incredulous; his absence will prevent that full light, which is so desirable, from being thrown on the proceedings."

Many years afterward I asked M. de Talleyrand one day what he thought of the death of Pichegru. "I think," said he, "that it happened very suddenly and in the nick of time!" But just then M. de Talleyrand had fallen out with Bonaparte, and took every opportunity of bringing accusations against him; I therefore by no means commit myself to any statement respecting this event. The subject was not spoken of at Saint Cloud, and every one refrained from the slightest reflection on it.

About this time Lucien Bonaparte left France, having quarreled irrevocably with his brother. His marriage with

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Mme. Jouberthon, which Bonaparte had been unable to prevent, was the cause of the rupture. The Consul, full of his great projects, made a last attempt to induce him to renounce this marriage; but it was in vain that Lucien was apprised of the approaching grandeur of his family, in vain that a marriage with the Queen of Etruria* was proposed to him. "Love was the strongest," and he refused everything. A violent scene ensued, and Lucien was exiled from France.

On this occasion I happened to see the First Consul give way to one of those rare bursts of emotion of which I have before spoken. It was at Saint Cloud, rather late one evening. Mme. Bonaparte was anxiously waiting the result of this final conference between the two brothers; M. de Rémusat and I were the only persons with her. She did not care for Lucien, but she deprecated any family scandal. It was near midnight when Bonaparte came into the room; he was deeply dejected, and, throwing himself into an arm-chair, he exclaimed, in a troubled voice, "It is all over! I have broken with Lucien, and ordered him from my presence." Mme. Bonaparte began to expostulate. "You are a good woman," he said, "to plead for him." Then he rose from his chair, took his wife in his arms, and laid her head softly on his shoulder, and with his hand still resting on the beautiful head which formed a contrast to the sad, set countenance so near it, he told us that Lucien had resisted all his entreaties, and that he had resorted equally in vain to both threats and persuasion. "It is hard, though," he added, "to find in one's own family such stubborn opposition to interests of such magnitude. Must I, then, isolate myself from every one? Must I rely on myself alone? Well! I will

* After the treaty of Lunéville, in 1801, Tuscany had been erected into the kingdom of Etruria and given to the son of the Duke of Parma. The King having died in 1803, his widow, Marie Louise, a daughter of Charles IV., King of Spain, succeeded him, and reigned until 1807, at which period the little kingdom was incorporated with the Empire, to be again dismembered in 1809 in favor of Mme. Bacciochi, who took the title of Grand Duchess of Tuscany.

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suffice to myself, and you, Josephine—you will be my comfort always."

I retain a pleasurable recollection of this little scene. Tears were in Bonaparte's eyes as he spoke. I felt inclined to thank him when he betrayed feelings like those of other men. Shortly after this, his brother Louis crossed his wishes in another way, and this incident had probably a great influence on the fate of Mme. Bonaparte.

The Consul, being quite resolved to raise himself to the throne of France and to found a dynasty, had occasionally glanced at the question of a divorce already; but, either because of his attachment to his wife being still too strong, or because his existing relations with Europe did not permit him to hope for an alliance which would strengthen his political position, he seemed just then disinclined to break with Josephine, and disposed to adopt the young Louis Napoleon, who was his own nephew and also Josephine's grandson.

He no sooner allowed this project to be discerned than his family rebelled. Joseph Bonaparte ventured to represent to him that he had done nothing to forfeit the right to the crown which, as eldest brother, he would acquire, and he defended that right as if it had really existed of old.

Bonaparte, who was always irritated by opposition, grew very angry, and only the more determined. He confided his intentions to his wife, who was overjoyed, and spoke to me as though the realization of this project would bring her own anxieties to an end. Mme. Louis assented, but without displaying any gratification. She was not at all ambitious, and, in fact, could not help fearing that such an elevation would bring down misfortune on the head of her son.

One day, when Bonaparte was surrounded by his family, he placed the little Napoleon between his knees, and said, while playing with him, "Do you know, my little fellow, that you run the risk of being a king some day?" "And Achille?"* immediately asked Murat, who was present.

* Achille was the eldest son of Murat.

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"Oh, Achille," answered Bonaparte, "will be a great soldier." This reply incensed Mme. Murat; but Bonaparte, pretending not to notice her, and stung by his brother's opposition, which he believed with reason to have been prompted by Mme. Murat, went on to say to his little step-grandson, "And mind, my poor child, I advise you, if you value your life, not to accept invitations to dine with your cousins."

We may imagine to what feelings such bitter words would give rise. From that moment Louis Bonaparte was beset by his family, who adroitly reminded him of the rumors respecting his wife, and that he ought not to sacrifice the interests of his own kinsfolk to those of a child who was at least half a Beauharnais; and, as Louis Bonaparte was not quite so destitute of ambition as people have since made him out, he, like Joseph, went to the First Consul to ask why the sacrifice of his own rights should be demanded of him. "Why," said he, "should I yield my share of inheritance to my son? How have I deserved to be cut off? What will my position be when this child, having become yours, finds himself very much higher placed than I, and quite independent of me, standing next to yourself, and regarding me with suspicion, if not with contempt? No; I will never consent to this; and, rather than renounce the proper course of succession to the royalty which is to be yours, rather than consent to humble myself before my own son, I will leave France, taking Napoleon with me, and we shall see whether you will dare openly to take a child from his father!"

The First Consul, powerful as he was, found it impossible to overcome his brother's opposition. His wrath availed nothing, and he was obliged to yield, for fear of a vexatious and even ridiculous scandal; for such it certainly would have been, to see this whole family quarreling beforehand over the crown which France had not yet actually conferred.

The strife was hushed up, and Napoleon was obliged to draw up the scheme of succession, and the possible case of

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adoption which he reserved to himself the power of making, in the terms to be found in the decree relating to the elevation of the First Consul to the Empire.

These quarrels embittered the enmity already existing between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais. The former regarded the plan of adoption as the result of Mme. Bonaparte's scheming. Louis gave stricter orders to his wife than before that she should hold no familiar intercourse with her mother. "If you consult her interests at the cost of mine," he told her harshly, "I swear to you that I will make you repent. I will separate you from your son; I will shut you up in some out-of-the-way place, and no power on earth shall deliver you. You shall pay for your concessions to your own family by the wretchedness of the rest of your life. And take care, above all, that none of my threats reach the ears of my brother. Even his power should not save you from my anger."

Mme. Louis bowed her head, a patient victim to this violence. She was then expecting the birth of her second child. Grief and anxiety told upon her health, which was permanently injured; the fresh complexion, her only beauty, disappeared. She had possessed natural spirits, but they now died away for ever; and she became silent and timid. She refrained from confiding her troubles to her mother, whose indiscretion and hasty temper she dreaded; and neither would she further irritate the First Consul. He, knowing well his brother's character, felt grateful to her for her reticence, and guessed at the sufferings she had to endure. From that time forth he never let an opportunity pass without exhibiting the interest—I may even say the respect—with which the mild and prudent demeanor of his stepdaughter inspired him.

What I have just said is quite opposed to the general opinion which has unfortunately been entertained of this unhappy woman; but her vindictive sisters-in-law never missed an opportunity of injuring her reputation by the

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most odious calumnies, and, as she bore the name of Bonaparte, the public, who, when they came to hate the Imperial despotism, included every one belonging to the family in their impartial contempt, readily believed every calumny against Mme. Louis. Her husband (whose ill treatment of her irritated him all the more against her), obliged to own that she could not love him after the tyranny he had exercised, jealous with the jealousy of pride, and naturally suspicious, embittered by ill health, and utterly selfish, made her feel the full weight of conjugal despotism. She was surrounded by spies; her letters were opened before they reached her hands; her conversations even with female friends were resented; and, if she complained of this insulting severity, he would say to her, "You can not love me. You are a woman—consequently a being all made up of evil and deceit; you are the daughter of an unprincipled mother; you belong to a family that I loathe. Are not these reasons enough for me to suspect you?"

Mme. Louis, from whom I obtained these details long afterward, found her only comfort in the affection of her brother, whose conduct, though jealously watched by the Bonapartes, was unassailable. Eugène, who was simple and frank, light-hearted, and open in all his dealings, displaying no ambition, holding himself aloof from every intrigue, and doing his duty wherever he was placed, disarmed calumny before it could reach him, and knew nothing of all that took place in the palace. His sister loved him passionately, and confided her sorrows to him only, during the few moments that the jealous watchfulness of Louis allowed them to pass together.

Meanwhile, the First Consul, having complained to the Elector of Bavaria of the correspondence which Mr. Drake kept up in France, and this English gentleman entertaining some apprehensions as to his own safety, as did also Sir Spencer Smith, the British Envoy at the Court of Würtemberg, they both suddenly disappeared. Lord Morpeth asked the

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Government, in the House of Commons, for an explanation of Drake's conduct. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that the envoy had been given authority for his proceedings, and that a fuller explanation should be afforded when the ambassador had furnished the information that had been demanded from him.

At this time Bonaparte held long and frequent consultations with M. de Talleyrand. The latter, whose opinions were essentially monarchical, urged the Consul to change his title to that of King. He has since owned to me that the name of Emperor alarmed him; it conveyed a sense of vagueness and immensity, which was precisely what charmed the imagination of Bonaparte. He added, "A combination of the Roman Republic and of Charlemagne in the title turned his head. I amused myself one day by mystifying Berthier. I took him aside, and said to him, 'You know of the great scheme that is occupying us. Go to the Consul, and urge him to take the title of King; it will please him.' Accordingly Berthier, who was delighted to have an opportunity of speaking to Bonaparte on an agreeable subject, went up to him at the other end of the room in which we were all assembled, and I drew back a little, foreseeing the storm. Berthier began his little speech, but at the word 'King' Bonaparte's eyes flashed fire; he seized Berthier by the throat, and pushed him back against the wall. 'You idiot!' he said; 'who has been advising you to come here and excite my anger? Another time, don't take such a task on yourself.' Poor Berthier, in dire confusion, looked piteously at me, and it was a long time before he forgave my sorry jest."

At last, on April 30, 1804, the tribune Curée, who had no doubt learnt his part, and who, later on, was rewarded for his complaisance by being created a senator, made what was then called "a motion of order" in the Tribunate, demanding that the government of the Republic should be confided to an Emperor, and that the Empire should be made hereditary in the family of Napoleon Bonaparte. His speech

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was effective. He regarded an hereditary succession, he said, as a guarantee against plots from without, and that in reality the title of Emperor only meant "Victorious Consul." Nearly all the tribunes put down their names to speak. A commission of thirteen members was appointed. Carnot alone had the courage to protest against this proposal. He declared that he would vote against an Empire, for the same reason that he had voted against a life Consulship, but without any personal animosity, and that he was quite prepared to render obedience to the Emperor should he be elected. He spoke in high praise of the American form of government, and added that Bonaparte might have adopted it at the time of the treaty of Amiens; that the abuses of despotism led to worse results than the abuses of liberty; and that, before smoothing the way to this despotism, which would be all the more dangerous because it was reared on military success, it would have been advisable to create institutions for its due repression. Notwithstanding Carnot's opposition, the motion was put to the vote and adopted.

On May 4th a deputation from the Tribunate carried it to the Senate, who were already prepared for it. The Vice-President, François de Neufchateau, replied that the Senate had expected the vote, and would take it into consideration. At the same sitting it was decided that the motion of the Tribunate and the answer of the Vice-President should be laid before the First Consul.

On May 5th the Senate sent an address to Bonaparte, asking him, without further explanation, for a final act which would insure the future peace of France. His answer to this address may be read in the "Moniteur." "I beg you," he said, "to let me know your entire purpose. I desire that we may be able to say to the French nation on the 14th of next July, 'The possessions that you acquired fifteen years ago, liberty, equality, and glory, are now beyond the reach of every storm." In reply, the Senate voted unanimously for imperial government, adding that, in the

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interests of the French people, it was important that it should be intrusted to Napoleon Bonaparte.

After May 8th addresses from the towns poured in at Saint Cloud. An address from Lyons came first; a little later came those from Paris and other places. At the same time came the vote from Klein's division,* and then one from the troops in camp at Montreuil under the orders of General Ney;† and the other divisions promptly followed these examples. M. de Fontanes addressed the First Consul in the name of the Corps Législatif, which at this moment was not sitting; but those among its members who were then in Paris met, and voted as the Senate had done. The excitement that these events caused at Saint Cloud may readily be imagined.

I have already recorded the disappointment which Louis Bonaparte's rejection of the project of adoption had inflicted on his mother-in-law. She still hoped, however, that the First Consul would contrive, if he himself remained in the same mind, to overcome the opposition of his brother; and she expressed to me her delight that her husband's new prospects had not induced him to reconsider the terrible question of the divorce. Whenever Bonaparte was displeased with his brothers, Mme. Bonaparte always rose in his estimation, because he found consolation in the unfailing sweetness of her disposition. She never tried to extract from him any promise either for herself or for her children; and the confidence she showed in his affection, together with the disinterestedness of Eugène, when contrasted with the exactions of the Bonaparte family, could not fail to please him. Mme. Bacciochi and Murat, who were in great anxiety about coming events, endeavored to worm out of M. de Talleyrand, or out of Fouché, the secret projects of the First Consul, so that they might know what to expect. Their perturbation

* General Klein afterward married the daughter of the Countess d'Arberg, a lady-in-waiting. He was created senator, and remained a peer under the King.

† Afterward Marshal Ney.

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was beyond their power to conceal; and it was with some amusement that I detected it in their troubled glances and in every word they let fall.

At last we were told, one evening, that on the following day the Senate was to come in great state and lay before Bonaparte the decree which should give him a crown. When I recall that evening, the emotions I experienced on hearing the news return to me. The First Consul, when informing his wife of the coming event, had told her he intended to surround himself with a more numerous Court, but that he would fitly distinguish between the new-comers and those old servants who had first devoted themselves to his service. He particularly desired her to assure M. de Rémusat and me of his good will toward us. I have already told how he bore with the anguish which I was unable to hide on the occasion of the death of the Duc d'Enghien. His indulgence on this point did not diminish; perhaps it amused him to pry into my secret feelings, and gradually to appease them by such marked kindness that it revived my flagging attachment to him.

I could not as yet overcome my feelings toward him. I grieved over his great fault; but when I saw that he was, so to speak, a better man than formerly, though I believed he had made a fatal mistake, I felt grateful to him for keeping his word and being gentle and kind afterward, as he had promised. The fact is that at this period he could not afford to dispense with anybody, and he therefore neglected no means of success. His dexterous behavior toward M. de Caulaincourt had won him over so that he had gradually recovered his former serenity of mind, and was at this epoch one of the confidants of the First Consul's schemes. Bonaparte, having questioned his wife as to what each person at Court had said at the time of the prince's death, learned from her that M. de Rémusat, who was habitually reticent both from inclination and from prudence, but who always spoke the truth when asked, had not hesitated to own his indigna-

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tion. Being apparently resolved that nothing should irritate him, he broached the subject to M. de Rémusat, and, having revealed to him as much of his policy as he thought proper, succeeded in convincing my husband that he had really believed the Duke's death indispensable to the safety of France. My husband, when repeating this conversation to me, said, "I am far from agreeing with him that this deed of blood was needed to establish his authority, and I did not hesitate to tell him so; but I own that it is a relief to me to think that he did not commit the crime out of revenge. He is, evidently distressed, no matter what he may say, by the effect it has produced; and I believe he will never again seek to strengthen his authority by such terrible means. I did not neglect to point out to him that in an age like ours, and in a nation like ours, it is playing a dangerous game to rule by terror and bloodshed; and I think that the earnest attention with which he listened to me augurs well for the future."

This sincere avowal of what we both felt shows how much need we had of hope. Severe judges of other people might blame us, no doubt, for the facility with which we again deceived ourselves, and impute our credulity, with apparent justice, to our own position in the Court. Ah! it is so hard to have to blush in secret for the calling one has chosen, it is so pleasant to like one's self-imposed duties, it is so natural to paint in bright colors one's own and one's country's future, that it is only after a long struggle the conviction of a truth which must shatter one's whole life is admitted. Such a truth did come home to us, slowly, but with a strength that could not be gainsaid; and we paid dearly for an error to which all well-disposed persons clung as long as possible.

On May 18, 1804, the Second Consul, Cambacérès, President of the Senate, came to Saint Cloud, accompanied by all the senators and escorted by a large body of troops. He made a set speech, and gave to Bonaparte for the first time the title of "Your Majesty." Bonaparte took it calmly, just as though he had borne it all his life. The Senate then pro-

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ceeded to the apartment of Mme. Bonaparte, who in her turn was proclaimed Empress. She replied with that natural grace which always raised her to the level of any position, however lofty, in which she might be placed.

At the same time, the Grand Dignitaries, as they were called, were created—Grand Elector, Joseph Bonaparte; High Constable, Louis Bonaparte; Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Cambacérès; Arch-Treasurer, Lebrun. The Ministers, Maret (the Secretary of State, who ranked with the Ministers), the Colonels-general of the Guards, Duroc (the Governor of the Palace), and the aides-de-camp took the oaths; and the next day the officers of the army, among whom was Colonel Eugène Beauharnais, were presented to the Emperor by the new Constable.

The opposition which Bonaparte had encountered in his own family, to his intended adoption of the little Louis, induced him to postpone that project. The succession was therefore declared to belong to the heirs male of Napoleon Bonaparte, and failing these, to the sons of Joseph and of Louis, who were created Imperial Princes. The organic *senatus consultum* declared that the Emperor might adopt as his successor any one of his nephews whom he chose, but not until the selected individual had reached the age of eighteen, and that no further act of adoption could take place in the family.

The civil list was to be the same as that granted to the King in 1791, and the princes were to be endowed in accordance with the law of December 20, 1791. The great dignitaries were to have one third of the sum settled on the princes. They were to preside over the electoral colleges of the six largest towns in the Empire, and the princes, from the eighteenth year of their age, were to be permanent members of the Senate and the Council of State.

Fourteen Marshals of France were created at this date, and the title of Marshal was conferred on four of the Senators. The new Marshals were Berthier, Murat, Moncey,

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Jourdan, Masséna, Augereau, Bernadotte, Soult, Brune, Lannes, Mortier, Ney, Davoust, Bessières; the four Senators were Kellermann, Lefebvre, Pérignon, and Serrurier.

An article in the "Moniteur" apprised the public that the title of Imperial Highness was to be given to the princes, that of Serene Highness and Monseigneur to the great dignitaries; that the Ministers were to be called Monseigneur by public officials and all petitioners, and the Marshals Monsieur le Maréchal.

Thus disappeared the title of "Citizen," which had long since been disused in society, where "Monsieur" had resumed its former place, but which Bonaparte was always most careful to employ. On the same day, the 18th of May, his brothers, with Cambacérès and Lebrun and the officers of his household, were invited to dine with him, and we heard him use the old word "Monsieur" for the first time, without being betrayed by habit into saying "Citizen" even once.

Titles were also accorded to the great officers of the Empire, eight inspectors and colonels-general of artillery, engineers, cavalry, and the navy, and the great civil officers of the Crown, to whom I shall refer hereafter.

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CHAPTER VII.

Effects and Causes of the Accession of Bonaparte to the Imperial Throne—The Emperor converses—The Grievances of Mme. Murat—The Character of M. de Rémusat—The New Court.

THE accession of Bonaparte to the Imperial throne was very variously regarded in Europe, and even in France opinions were divided. It is, however, quite certain that it did not displease the great majority of the nation. The Jacobins were not astonished by it, for they themselves were in the habit of pushing success as far as it would go, whenever luck favored them. Among the Royalists it spread disheartenment, and that was just what Bonaparte wanted. The exchange of the Consulate for Imperial authority was, however, regarded with dislike by all true friends of liberty. These true friends were, unfortunately, divided into two classes, so that their influence was diminished—an evil which still exists. One class regarded the change of the reigning dynasty with indifference, and would have accepted Bonaparte as readily as another, provided that he had received his royal authority in right of a constitution which would have restrained as well as founded it. They regarded the seizure of power by an enterprising and warlike man with serious apprehension; for it was plain enough that the so-called "bodies of the State," which were already reduced to insignificance, would be unable to check his encroachments. The Senate seemed to be given over to mere passive obedience; the Tribunate was shaken to its foundations; and what was to be expected from a silent Corps Législatif? The Ministers, deprived of all responsibility, were no more than head

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clerks, and it was evident beforehand that the Council of State would henceforth be merely a storehouse, whence such laws as circumstances might demand could be taken, as occasion for them arose.

If this section of the friends of liberty had been more numerous and better led, it might have set itself to demand the settled and legitimate exercise of its rights, which is never demanded in vain by a nation in the long run. There existed, however, a second party, which agreed with the first on fundamental principles only, and, abiding by theories of its own, which it had already attempted to practice in a dangerous and sanguinary manner, lost the opportunity of producing an effective opposition. To this section belonged the proselytes of the Anglo-American Government, who had disgusted the nation with the notion of liberty.

They had witnessed the creation of the Consulate without any protest, for it was a tolerably fair imitation of the Presidentship of the United States; they believed, or wished to believe, that Bonaparte would maintain that equality of rights to which they attached so much importance, and some among them were really deceived. I say "some," because I think the greater number fell into a trap, baited with flattery and consultations on all sorts of matters, which Bonaparte dexterously set for them. If they had not had some private interest to serve by deceiving themselves, how could they have declared afterward that they had approved of Bonaparte only as Consul, but that as Emperor he was odious to them? In what respect was he, while Consul, different from his ordinary self? What was his Consular authority but dictatorship under another name? Did he not, as Consul, make peace and declare war without consulting the nation? Did not the right of levying the conscription devolve upon him? Did he permit freedom in the discussion of affairs? Could any journal publish a single article without his approval? Did he not make it perfectly clear that he held his power by the right of his victorious arms? How,

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then, could stern Republicans have allowed him to take them by surprise?

I can understand how it was that men, worn out by the turmoil of the Revolution, and afraid of that liberty which had been so long associated with death, looked for repose under the dominion of an able ruler, on whom fortune was seemingly resolved to smile. I can conceive that they regarded his elevation as a decree of destiny, and fondly believed that in the irrevocable they should find peace. I may confidently assert that those persons believed quite sincerely that Bonaparte, whether as Consul or as Emperor, would exert his authority to oppose the attempts of faction, and would save us from the perils of anarchy.

None dared to utter the word Republic, so deeply had the Terror stained that name, and the Directorial government had perished in the contempt with which its chiefs were regarded. The return of the Bourbons could only be brought about by the aid of a revolution; and the slightest disturbance terrified the French people, in whom enthusiasm of every kind seemed to be dead. Besides, the men in whom they had trusted had, one after the other, deceived them; and as, this time, they were yielding to force, they were at least certain that they were not deceiving themselves.

The belief, or, rather the error, that only despotism could at that epoch maintain order in France, was very widespread. It became the mainstay of Bonaparte; and it is due to him to say that he also held it. The factions played into his hands by imprudent attempts which he turned to his own advantage; he had some grounds for his belief that he was necessary; France believed it too; and he even succeeded in persuading foreign sovereigns that he formed a barrier against Republican influences, which, but for him, might spread widely. At the moment when Bonaparte placed the Imperial crown upon his head, there was not a king in Europe who did not believe that he wore his own crown more securely because of that event. Had the new Emperor added

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to that decisive act the gift of a liberal constitution, the peace of nations and of kings might, in sober seriousness, have been for ever secured.

Sincere defenders of Bonaparte's original system—and some of these still exist—advance, in justification of it, that we could not have exacted from him that which it belongs only to a legitimate sovereign to bestow; that freedom to discuss our interests might have been followed by the discussion of our rights; that England, jealous of our reviving prosperity, would have fomented fresh disturbances among us; that our princes had not abandoned their designs, and that the slow methods of constitutional government would not have availed to restrain the contending factions. Hume says, when speaking of Cromwell, that it is a great difficulty for a usurping government that its personal policy is generally opposed to the interest of its country. This gives a superiority to hereditary authority, of which it would be well that nations should be convinced. But, after all, Bonaparte was not an ordinary usurper; his elevation offered no point of comparison with that of Cromwell. "I found the crown of France lying on the ground," said he, "and I took it up on the point of my sword." He was the product of an inevitable revolution; but he had no share in its disasters, and I sincerely believe that, until the death of the Duc d'Enghien, it would have been possible for him to legitimize his power by conferring upon France benefits of a kind which would have pledged the nation to him and his for ever.

His despotic ambition misled him; but, I say it again, he was not the only one who went astray. He was beguiled by appearances which he did not take the trouble to investigate. The word "liberty" did indeed resound in the air about him, but those who uttered it were not held in sufficient esteem by the nation to be made its representatives to him. Well-meaning, honest folk asked nothing of him but repose, and did not trouble themselves about the form under which it was to be granted. And then, he knew well that the secret

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weakness of the French nation was vanity, and he saw a means of gratifying it easily by the pomp and display that attend on monarchical power. He revived distinctions which were now, in reality, democratic, because they were placed within the reach of all and entailed no privileges. The eagerness displayed in the pursuit of these titles, and of crosses, which were objects of derision while they hung on the coats of one's neighbors, was not likely to undeceive him, if indeed he was on the wrong road. Was it not natural, on the contrary, that he should applaud and congratulate himself, when he had succeeded in bringing feudal and republican pretensions to the same level by the assistance of a few bits of ribbons and some words added to men's names? Had not we ourselves much to do with that notion which became so firmly fixed in his mind, that, for his own safety and for ours, he ought to use the power which he possessed to suspend the Revolution without destroying it? "My successor," said he, "whoever he may be, will be forced to march with his own times, and to find his support in liberal opinions. I will bequeath them to him, but deprived of their primitive asperity." France imprudently applauded this idea.

Nevertheless, a warning voice—that of conscience for him, that of our interests for us—spoke to him and to us alike. If he would silence that importunate whisper, he would have to dazzle us by a series of surprising feats. Hence those interminable wars, whose duration was so all-important to him that he always called the peace which he signed "a halt," and hence the fact that into every one of his treaties he was forced by M. de Talleyrand's skill in negotiation. When he returned to Paris, and resumed the administration of the affairs of France, in addition to the fact that he did not know what to do with an army whose demands grew with its victories, he had to encounter the dumb but steady and inevitable resistance which the spirit of the age, in spite of individual proclivities, opposes to despotism; so

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that despotism has happily become an impracticable mode of government. It died with the good fortune of Bonaparte, when, as Mme. de Staël said, "The terrible mace which he alone could wield fell at last upon his own head." Happy, thrice happy, are the days in which we are now living, since we have exhausted every experiment, and only madmen can dispute the road which leads to safety.

Bonaparte was seconded for a long time by the military ardor of the youth of France. That insensate passion for conquest which has been implanted by an evil spirit in men collected into societies, to retard the progress of each generation in every kind of prosperity, urged us forward in the path of Bonaparte's career of devastation. France can rarely resist glory, and it was especially tempting when it covered and disguised the humiliation to which we were then condemned. When Bonaparte was quiet, he let us perceive the reality of our servitude; when our sons marched away to plant our standards on the ramparts of all the great cities of Europe, that servitude disappeared. It was a long time before we recognized that each one of our conquests was a link in the chain that fettered our liberties; and, when we became fully aware of what our intoxication had led us into, it was too late for resistance. The army had become the accomplice of tyranny, had broken with France, and would treat a cry for deliverance as revolt.

The greatest of Bonaparte's errors—one very characteristic of him—was that he never took anything but success into account in the calculations on which he acted. Perhaps he was more excusable than another would have been in doubting whether any reverse could come to him. His natural pride shrank from the idea of a defeat of any kind. There was the weak point in his strong mind, for such a man as he ought to have contemplated every contingency. But, as he lacked nobility of soul, and had not that instinctive elevation of mind which rises above evil fortune, he turned his thoughts away from this weakness in himself, and contemplated only

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his wonderful faculty of growing greater with success. "*I shall succeed*" was the basis of all his calculations, and his obstinate repetition of the phrase helped him to realize the prediction. At length his own good fortune grew into a superstition with him, and his worship of it made every sacrifice which was to be imposed upon us fair and lawful in his eyes.

And we ourselves—let us once more own it—did we not at first share this baleful superstition? At the time of which I write, it had great mastery over our wonder-loving imaginations. The trial of General Moreau and the death of the Duc d'Enghien had shocked every one's feelings, but had not changed public opinion. Bonaparte scarcely tried to conceal that both events had furthered the project which for a long time past he had been maturing. It is to the credit of human nature that repugnance to crime is innate among us; that we willingly believe, when a guilty act is acknowledged by its perpetrator, that he has been absolutely forced to commit it; and, when he succeeded in raising himself by such deeds, we too readily accepted the bargain that he offered us—absolution on our part, as the guerdon of success on his.

Thenceforth he was no longer beloved; but the days in which monarchs reign through the love of nations are gone by, and, when Bonaparte let us see that he could punish even our thoughts, he was well pleased to exchange the affection we had striven to retain for him for the very real fear that he inspired. We admired, or at least we wondered at, the boldness of the game which he was openly playing; and when at last he sprang, with imposing audacity, from the blood-stained grave at Vincennes to the steps of the Imperial throne, exclaiming, "I have won!" France, in her amazement, could but reëcho his words. And that was all he wanted her do.

A few days after Bonaparte had assumed the title of Emperor (by which I shall not scruple to designate him, for,

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after all, he bore it longer than that of Consul *), on one of those occasions when, as I have said before, he was disposed to talk freely to us, he was discussing his new position with the Empress, my husband, and myself. I think I see him still, in the window-recess of a drawing-room at Saint Cloud, astride on a chair, resting his chin on the back of it. Mme. Bonaparte reclined on a sofa near him; I was sitting opposite him, and M. de Rémusat stood behind my chair. For a long time the Emperor had been silent; then he suddenly addressed me: "You have borne me a grudge for the death of the Duc d'Enghien?" "It is true, Sire," I answered, "and I still bear it you. I believe you did yourself much harm by that act." "But are you aware that he was waiting at the frontier for me to be assassinated?" "Possibly, Sire; but still he was not in France." "Ah! there is no harm in showing other countries, now and then, that one is the master." "There, Sire, do not let us speak of it, or you will make me cry." "Ah! tears! Woman's only weapon. That is like Josephine. She thinks she has carried her point when she begins to cry. Are not tears, M. de Rémusat, the strongest argument of women?" "Sire," replied my husband, "there are tears which can not be censured."

"Ah! I perceive that you also take a serious view of the matter. But that is quite natural; you have seen other days, all of you, and you remember them. I only date from the day when I began to be somebody. What is a Duc d'Enghien to me? Only an *émigré*, more important than the others—nothing more. But that was enough to make me strike hard. Those crack-brained Royalists had actually spread a report that I was to replace the Bourbons on the throne. The Jacobins became alarmed, and they sent Fouché to me to inquire into my intentions. Power has for the last two years fallen so naturally into my hands, that people may

* This remark would appear a strange one, if the reader did not recollect that the Memoirs were written under the Restoration, when the words Emperor, Empire, and Bonaparte were no longer uttered in good society.—P. R.

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well have doubted sometimes whether I had any serious intention of investing myself with it officially. I came to the conclusion that it was my duty to profit by this, in order to put a lawful end to the Revolution. The reason why I chose Empire rather than Dictatorship is because one becomes legitimate by taking up well-known ground. I began by trying to reconcile the two contending factions at the time of my accession to the Consulship. I thought that, in establishing order by means of permanent institutions, I should put an end to their enterprises; but factions are not to be put down so long as any fear of them is shown, and every attempt to conciliate them looks like fear. Besides, it may sometimes be possible to get the better of a sentiment; but of an opinion, never. I saw clearly that I could make no alliance between the two, but that I might make one with both of them on my own account. The Concordat and the permissions to return have conciliated the *émigrés*, and I shall soon be completely reconciled with them; for you will see how the attractions of a Court will allure them. The mere phrases that recall former habits will win over the nobility, but the Jacobins require deeds. They are not men to be won by fair words. They were satisfied with my necessary severity when, after the 3d Nivose,* at the very moment of a purely Royalist conspiracy, I transported a number of Jacobins. They might justly have complained if I had struck a weaker blow. You all thought I was becoming cruel and bloodthirsty, but you were wrong. I have no feelings of hatred—I am not capable of acting from revenge; I only sweep obstacles from my path, and, if it were expedient, you should see me pardon Georges Cadoudal to-morrow, although he came simply and solely to assassinate me.

"When people find that public tranquillity is the result of the event in question, they will no longer reproach me with it, and in a year's time this execution will be regarded as a great act of policy. It is true, however, that it has

* The epoch of the "infernal machine."

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driven me to shorten the crisis. What I have just done I did not intend to do for two years yet. I meant to retain the Consulate, although words and things clash with one another under this form of government, and the signature I affixed to all the acts of my authority was the sign manual of a continual lie. We should have got on nevertheless, France and I, because she has confidence in me, and what I will she wills.

"As, however, this particular conspiracy was meant to shake the whole of Europe, the Royalists and also Europe had to be undeceived. I had to choose between continuous persecution or one decisive blow; and my decision was not doubtful. I have for ever silenced both Royalists and Jacobins. Only the Republicans remain—mere dreamers, who think a republic can be made out of an old monarchy, and that Europe would stand by and let us quietly found a federative government of twenty million men. The Republicans I shall not win, but they are few in number and not important. The rest of you Frenchmen like a monarchy; it is only the government that pleases you. I will wager that you, M. de Rémusat, are a hundred times more at your ease, now that you call me *Sire* and that I address you as *Monsieur?*"

As there was some truth in this remark, my husband laughed, and answered that certainly the sovereign power became his Majesty very well.

"The fact is," resumed the Emperor, good-humoredly, "I believe I should not know how to obey. I recollect, at the time of the Treaty of Campo Formio, M. de Cobentzel and I met, in order to conclude it, in a room where, according to an Austrian custom, a dais had been erected and the throne of the Emperor of Austria was represented. On entering the room, I asked what that meant; and afterward I said to the Austrian Minister, 'Now, before we begin, have that arm-chair removed, for I can never see one seat higher than the others without instantly wanting to place myself in it.'

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You see, I had an instinct of what was to happen to me some day.

"I have now acquired one great advantage for my government of France: neither she nor I will deceive ourselves any longer. Talleyrand wanted me to make myself *King*—that is *the* word of his dictionary; but I will have no *grands seigneurs*, except those I make myself. Besides which, the title of King is worn out. Certain preconceived ideas are attached to it; it would make me a kind of heir, and I will be the heir of no one. The title that I bear is a grander one; it is still somewhat vague, and leaves room for the imagination. Here is a revolution brought to an end, and, I flatter myself, not harshly. Would you know why? Because no interests have been displaced, and many have been revived. That vanity of yours must always have breathing room; you would have been wearied to death with the dull sternness of a republican government. What caused the Revolution? Vanity. What will end it? Vanity again. Liberty is a pretext; equality is your hobby, and here are the people quite pleased with a king taken from the ranks of the soldiery. Men like the Abbé Siéyès," he added, laughing, "may inveigh against despotism, but my authority will always be popular. To-day I have the people and the army on my side; and with these a man would be a great fool who could not reign."

With these concluding words, Bonaparte rose. Hitherto he had been very agreeable; his tone of voice, his countenance, his gestures, all were familiar and encouraging. He had been smiling, he had seen our answering smiles, and had even been amused by the remarks we had made on his discourse; in fact, he had put us perfectly at our ease. But now, in a moment, his manner changed. He looked at us sternly, in a way that always seemed to increase his short stature, and gave M. de Rémusat some insignificant order in the curt tone of a despotic master, who takes care that every request shall be a command.

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His tone of voice, so different from that to which I had been listening for the last hour, made me start; and, when we had withdrawn, my husband, who had noticed my involuntary movement, told me that he had felt the same sensation. "You perceive," he said, "he was afraid that this momentary unbending and confidence might lessen the fear he is always anxious to inspire. He therefore thought proper to dismiss us with a reminder that he is the *master*." I never forgot this just observation, and more than once I have seen that it was founded on a sound appreciation of Bonaparte's character.

I have allowed myself to digress in relating this conversation and the reflections which preceded it, and must now return to the day on which Bonaparte was made Emperor, and continue to depict the curious scenes of which I was an eye-witness.

I have already enumerated the guests whom Bonaparte invited to dine with him on that day. Just before dinner was announced, Duroc, the Governor of the Palace, informed each of us, severally, that the title of Prince was to be given to Joseph and Louis Bonaparte, and that of Princess to their wives. Mmes. Bacciochi and Murat were enraged at the distinction thus made between themselves and their sisters-in-law; and Mme. Murat could hardly conceal her anger. At six o'clock the new Emperor made his appearance, and, with perfect ease and readiness, saluted each one present by his or her new title. The scene made a deep impression on me; I felt it like a presentiment. The early part of the day had been fine, but very hot; but, about the time of the arrival of the Senate at Saint Cloud, the weather suddenly changed, the sky became overcast, thunder was heard, and for several hours a storm seemed impending. The dark and heavy atmosphere which weighed on the palace of Saint Cloud struck me as an evil omen, and I could hardly conceal the depression I felt. The Emperor was in good spirits, and, I think, secretly enjoyed the slight confusion which the

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new ceremonial created among us all. The Empress was, as usual, gracious, and unaffected, and easy; Joseph and Louis looked pleased; Mme. Joseph appeared resigned to anything that might be required of her; Mme. Louis was equally submissive; and Eugène Beauharnais, whom I can not praise too highly in comparison with the others, was simple and natural, evidently free from any secret ambition or repining. This was not the case with the new-made Marshal Murat; but his fear of his brother-in-law forced him to restrain himself, and he maintained a sullen silence. Mme. Murat was excessively angry, and during the dinner had so little control over herself that, on hearing the Emperor address Mme. Louis several times as "Princess," she could not restrain her tears. She drank several glasses of water in order to recover herself, and to appear to be taking something at the table, but her tears were not to be checked. Every one was embarrassed, and her brother smiled maliciously. For my own part, I was surprised, and even shocked, to see that young and pretty face disfigured by emotions whose source was so mean a passion.

Mme. Murat was then between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age; her dazzlingly white skin, her beautiful fair hair, the flowery wreath which decked it, the rose-colored dress she wore, all contributed to give her a youthful and childlike appearance. The feelings which she now displayed contrasted harshly with those charms. No one could pity her tears, and I think they impressed every one else as disagreeably as they impressed me.

Mme. Bacciochi, who was older and had more command over herself, shed no tears; but her manner was abrupt and sarcastic, and she treated us all with marked haughtiness.

The Emperor became annoyed at last by his sisters' behavior, and he aggravated their ill humor by indirect taunts, which wounded them very deeply. All that I witnessed during that eventful day gave me new notions of the effect which ambition produces on minds of a certain order; it was

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a spectacle of which I could have formed no previous conception.

On the following day, after a family dinner, a violent scene took place, at which I was not present; but we could hear something of it through the wall which divided the Empress's boudoir from our salon. Mme. Murat burst into complaints, tears, and reproaches; she asked why she and her sisters were to be condemned to obscurity and contempt, while strangers were to be loaded with honors and dignity? Bonaparte answered her angrily, asserting several times that he was master, and would distribute honors as he pleased. It was on this occasion that he uttered the memorable remark, "Really, mesdames, to hear your pretension, one would think we hold the crown from our father, the late King."

The Empress afterward retailed to me the whole of this angry dispute. With all her kind-heartedness, she could not help enjoying the wrath of a person who so thoroughly disliked her. The discussion ended by Mme. Murat's falling on the floor in a dead faint, overcome by her excessive anger and by the acrimony of her brother's reproaches. At this, Bonaparte's anger vanished, and when his sister recovered consciousness he gave her some little encouragement. A few days later, after a consultation with M. de Talleyrand, Cambacérès, and others, it was arranged that titles of courtesy should be given to the sisters of the Emperor, and we learned from the "Moniteur" that they were to be addressed as "Imperial Highness."

Another vexation was, however, in store for Mme. Murat and her husband. The private regulations of the palace of Saint Cloud divided the Imperial apartment into several reception-rooms, which could only be entered according to the newly acquired rank of each person. The room nearest the Emperor's cabinet became the throne-room, or Princes' room, and Marshal Murat, although the husband of a princess, was excluded from it. M. de Rémusat had the unpleasant task of refusing him admittance when he was about to pass in.

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Although my husband was not responsible for the orders he had received, and executed them with scrupulous politeness, Murat was deeply offended by this public affront; and he and his wife, already prejudiced against us on account of our attachment to the Empress, henceforth honored us both, if I may use the word, with a secret enmity, of which we have more than once experienced the effects. Mme. Murat, however, who had discovered her influence over her brother, was far from considering the case hopeless on this occasion; and, in fact, she eventually succeeded in raising her husband to the position she so eagerly desired for him.

The new code of precedence caused some disturbance in a Court which had hitherto been tolerably quiet. The struggle of contending vanity that convulsed the Imperial family was parodied in Mme. Bonaparte's circle.

In addition to her four ladies-in-waiting, Mme. Bonaparte was in the habit of receiving the wives of the various officers attached to the service of the First Consul. Besides these, Mme. Murat was frequently invited—she lived permanently at Saint Cloud on account of her husband's position there; also Mme. de la Valette, the Marquis de Beauharnais's daughter, whose misfortunes and conjugal tenderness afterward made her famous at the time of the sentence passed on her husband and his escape, in 1815. He was of very humble origin, but clever, and of an amiable disposition. After having served some time in the army, he had abandoned a mode of life unsuited to his tastes. The First Consul had employed him on some diplomatic missions, and had just appointed him Counsellor of State. He evinced extreme devotion to all the Beauharnais, whose kinsman he had become. His wife was amiable and unpretending by nature, but it seemed as though vanity were to become the ruling passion in every one belonging to the Court, of both sexes and all ages.

An order from the Emperor which gave the ladies-in-waiting precedence over others became a signal for an outburst of feminine jealousy. Mme. Maret, a cold, proud per-

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sonage, was annoyed that we should take precedence of her, and made common cause with Mme. Murat, who fully shared her feelings. Besides this, M. de Talleyrand, who was no friend to Maret, and mercilessly ridiculed his absurdities, and was also on bad terms with Murat, had become an object of dislike to both, and, consequently, a bond of union between the two. The Empress did not like anybody who was a friend of Mme. Murat, and treated Mme. Maret with some coldness; and, although I never shared any of these feelings, and, for my own part, disliked nobody, I was included in the animadversions of that party upon the Beauharnais.

On Sunday morning the new Empress received commands to appear at mass, attended only by her four ladies-in-waiting. Mme. de la Valette, who had hitherto accompanied her aunt on all occasions, finding herself suddenly deprived of this privilege, burst into tears, and so we had to set about consoling this ambitious young lady. I observed these things with much amusement, preserving my serenity in these somewhat absurd dissensions, which were, nevertheless, natural enough. So much was it a matter of course for the inmates of the palace to live in a state of excitement, and to be either joyous or depressed according as their new-born projects of ambition were accomplished or disappointed, that one day, when I was in great spirits and laughing heartily at some jest or other, one of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp came up to me and asked me in a low voice whether I had been promised some new dignity. I could not help asking him in return whether he fancied that at Saint Cloud one must always be in tears unless one was a princess.

Yet I had my own little ambition too, but it was moderate and easy to satisfy. The Emperor had made known to me through the Empress, and M. de Caulaincourt had repeated it to my husband, that, on the consolidation of his own fortunes, he would not forget those who had from the first devoted themselves to his service. Relying on this assurance,

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we felt easy with regard to our future, and took no steps to render it secure. We were wrong, for every one else was actively at work. M. de Rémusat had always kept aloof from any kind of scheming, a defect in a man who lived at a Court. Certain good qualities are absolutely a bar to advancement in the favor of sovereigns. They do not like to find generous feelings and philosophical opinions which are a mark of independence of mind in their surroundings; and they think it still less pardonable that those who serve them should have any means of escaping from their power. Bonaparte, who was exacting in the kind of service he required, quickly perceived that M. de Rémusat would serve him faithfully, and yet would not bend to all his caprices. This discovery, together with some additional circumstances which I shall relate in their proper places, induced him to discard his obligations to him. He retained my husband near him; he made use of him to suit his own convenience; but he did not confer the same honors upon him which he bestowed on many others, because he knew that no favors would procure the compliance of a man who was incapable of sacrificing self-respect to ambition. The arts of a courtier were, besides, incompatible with M. de Rémusat's tastes. He liked solitude, serious occupations, family life; every feeling of his heart was tender and pure; the use, or rather the waste of his time, which was exclusively occupied in a continual and minute attention to the details of Court etiquette, was a source of constant regret to him. The Revolution, which removed him from the ranks of the magistracy, having deprived him of his chosen calling, he thought it his duty to his children to accept the position which had offered itself; but the constant attention to important trifles to which he was condemned was wearisome, and he was only punctual when he ought to have been assiduous. Afterward, when the veil fell from his eyes, and he saw Bonaparte as he really was, his generous spirit was roused to indignation, and close personal attendance on him became very painful to my hus-

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band. Nothing is so fatal to the promotion of a courtier as his being actuated by conscientious scruples which he does not conceal. But, at the period of which I am speaking, these feelings of ours were still only vague, and I must repeat what I have already said—that we believed that the Emperor was in some measure indebted to us, and we relied on him.

The time soon came, however, when we lost some of our importance. People of rank equal to our own, and soon afterward those who were our superiors both in rank and fortune, begged to be allowed to form part of the Imperial Court; and thenceforth the services of those who were the first to show the way thither decreased in value. Bonaparte was highly delighted at his gradual conquest of the French nobility, and even Mme. Bonaparte, who was more susceptible of affection than he, had her head turned for a time by finding real *grandes dames* among her ladies-in-waiting. Wiser and more far-sighted persons than ourselves would have been more than ever attentive and assiduous in order to keep their footing, which was disputed in every direction by a crowd full of their own importance; but, far from acting thus, we gave way to them. We saw in all this an opportunity of partially regaining our freedom, and imprudently availed ourselves of it; and when, from any cause whatever, one loses ground at Court, it is rarely to be recovered.

M. de Talleyrand, who was urging Bonaparte to surround himself with all the prestige of royalty, advised him to gratify the vanity and pretension of those whom he wished to allure; and in France the nobility can be satisfied only by being placed in the front. Those distinctions to which they thought themselves entitled had to be dangled before their eyes; the Montmorencys, the Montesquious, etc., were secured by the promise that, from the day they cast in their lot with Bonaparte, they should resume all their former importance. In fact, it could not be otherwise, when the Emperor had once resolved on forming a regular Court.

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Some persons have thought that Bonaparte would have done more wisely had he retained some of the simplicity and austerity in externals which disappeared with the Consulate when he adopted the new title of Emperor. A constitutional government and a limited Court, displaying no luxury, and significant of the change which successive revolutions had wrought in people's ideas, might perhaps have been less pleasing to the national vanity, but it would have commanded more real respect. At the time of which I am speaking, the dignities to be conferred on those persons surrounding the new sovereign were much discussed. Duroc requested M. de Rémusat to give his ideas on the subject in writing. He drew up a wise and moderate plan, but which was too simple for those secret projects which no one had then divined. "There is not sufficient display in it," said Bonaparte, as he read it; "all that would not throw dust in people's eyes." His object was to decoy, in order to deceive more effectually.

As he refused to give a free constitution to the French, he had to conciliate and fascinate them by every possible means; and, there being always some littleness in pride, supreme power was not enough for him—he must have the appearance of it too; he must have etiquette, chamberlains, and so forth, which he believed would disguise the *parvenu*. He liked display; he leaned toward a feudal system quite alien to the age in which he lived, but which nevertheless he intended to establish. It would, however, in all probability, have only lasted for the duration of his own reign.

It would be impossible to record all his notions on this subject. The following were some of them: "The French Empire," he would say, "will become the mother country of the other sovereignties of Europe. I intend that each of the kings shall be obliged to build a big palace for his own use in Paris; and that, on the coronation of the Emperor of the French, these kings shall come to Paris, and grace by their presence that imposing ceremony to which they will render

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homage." What did this project mean, except that he hoped to revive the feudal system, and to resuscitate a Charlemagne who, for his own advantage only, and to strengthen his own power, should avail himself of the despotic notions of a former era and also of the experience of modern times?

Bonaparte frequently declared that he alone was the whole Revolution, and he at length persuaded himself that in his own person he preserved all of it which it would not be well to destroy.

A fever of etiquette seemed to have seized on all the inhabitants of the Imperial palace of Saint Cloud. The ponderous regulations of Louis XIV. were taken down from the shelves in the library, and extracts were commenced from them, in order that a code might be drawn up for the use of the new Court. Mme. Bonaparte sent for Mme. Campan, who had been First Bedchamber Woman to Marie Antoinette. She was a clever woman, and kept a school, where, as I have already mentioned, nearly all the young girls who appeared at Bonaparte's Court had been educated. She was questioned in detail as to the manners and customs of the last Queen of France, and I was appointed to write everything that she related from her dictation. Bonaparte added the very voluminous memoranda which resulted from this to those which were brought to him from all sides. M. de Talleyrand was consulted about everything. There was a continual coming and going; people were living in a kind of uncertainty which had its pleasing side, because every one hoped to rise higher. I must candidly confess that we all felt ourselves more or less elevated. Vanity is ingenious in its expectations, and ours were unlimited.

Sometimes it was disenchanting, for a moment, to observe the almost ridiculous effect that this agitation produced upon certain classes of society. Those who had nothing to do with our brand-new dignities said with Montaigne, "*Vengeons-nous par en médire.*" Jests more or less witty, and *calembours* more or less ingenious, were lavished on these new-

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made princes, and somewhat disturbed our brilliant visions; but the number of those who dare to censure success is small, and flattery was much more common than criticism, at any rate in the circle under our observation.

Such was, then, the position of affairs at the close of the era which terminates here. The narrative of the second epoch will show what progress we all made (when I say "we all," I mean France and Europe) in this course of brilliant errors, which was destined to lead to the loss of our liberties and the obscuration of our true greatness for a long period.

In the April of that year Bonaparte made his brother Louis a member of the Council of State, and Joseph colonel of the 4th Regiment of Infantry. "You must both belong to the civil and military service by turns," he said. "You must not be strangers to anything that concerns the interests of the country."

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